

THE HILL OF ANGELS







[See page 18.]



THE HILL OF ANGELS

BY

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CHAPTER I.

EVELYN'S HEROINE.

What therefore is loyalty proper, the life-breath of all society, but an effluence of Hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great? Society is founded on Hero-worship.—CARLYLE : *Heroes*.

A NIGHT early in June !
It calls up to the poetic fancy visions of peace and tranquillity, still pastures lying beneath the moon, with the dim forms of cattle couched here and there, and the trees 'laying' their dark arms about the field,' the fresh scent of earth stealing up into the silence, and the only sound the murmur of a distant brook or the rustling of foliage stirred by wandering breezes. For this picture a Londoner has to substitute the glare of lamps, the ceaseless roar and rattle of carriages, the hurry of foot-passengers, all bent on business or pleasure. These fill his summer night, instead of rest and calm.

In Piccadilly the uproar seems at its greatest. The spacious courtyard of Burlington House is usually quiet, comparatively speaking, at this hour—a lonely backwater apart from the river

of life that rushes hard by. But on this special night it is invaded by the outer current with sound and fury. Carriage after carriage rolls up to the entrance on the right, whence the light that pours forth shows revelry is going on within.

It is not exactly revelry after all, for it is the 'Ladies' *Conversazione* of the Royal Society, and Science, though for one evening she condescends to lay aside her sterner aspect, is Science still!

There is a great variety of dress in the room where the lady guests are laying aside cloak and shawl. Fashionable women, who take the *conversazione* as one item merely in the season's round, and are on their way somewhere else, appear in full evening dress, with perchance the flash of many diamonds; others, again, less experienced, have considered a black silk, adorned about the neck with scraps of white lace and ribbon, sufficient tribute to the occasion. Between these two extremes might be classed one little group of three at the end of the room.

The most noticeable figure of the trio is a tall and graceful girl in a plain frock of ivory silk, with her head well set upon her shoulders. Her brow is clear and intelligent, and it is remarkable that at a period when Fashion orders her to conceal her temples with her hair, she wears the wavy brown locks brushed back high above her forehead, and coiled in a plait behind. Her dark blue eyes, set deep in their

sockets, are large and candid; her complexion is of a healthy paleness, and her lips are full and red. It is a pleasant though not a marvellously handsome face; the chief attraction in it comes from a certain light in the eyes and on the brow that speaks of imagination.

Her name is Evelyn Hope, and she is accompanied by her aunt and cousin, Mrs. Lancaster, and her daughter Dorothy, *alias* Dottie. The latter, a dark-haired, dark-eyed little creature in amber 'Liberty' draperies, is a contrast in every way to her *svelte* cousin, excepting in the sweetness of her expression. Two thoroughly 'nice' girls would the pair have been called by any attentive observer. And the mother, round, florid, panting, in a wonderful dress of dark crimson brocade, is evidently good-natured; evidently also a little less accustomed than her younger companions to the haunts of fashion and science.

They have had a long drive, for they have come from a suburb far away in the southwestern district, and are now collecting their forces for the reception by the President of the Royal Society.

'Come, mother,' urged Dot, 'it's time we went upstairs.'

'Oh, dear!' sighed Mrs. Lancaster, 'I feel just as if I were going to be presented at Court. Tell me, Evelyn, you know best—shall I shake hands with him or not?'

'Oh dear no, auntie!' cried Evelyn anxiously; 'just bow; it's nothing at all to alarm

you. I am afraid uncle will be tired of waiting for us.'

Apparently this fear was well-founded, for a slight line furrowed the brow of the military-looking, grey-haired, grey-moustached gentleman outside when they joined him. To this uncle, Mr. Austin Hope, the three ladies owed their invitation to-night. He was not related to Mrs. Lancaster, and would have been greatly offended had you supposed it possible; but he was Evelyn's uncle on the father's side, whereas Mrs. Lancaster, with whom the orphan girl lived, was her mother's sister.

They mingled in the crowd ascending the staircase, heard their names shouted in a stentorian voice, and made their bow and curtsy to the gentleman of European fame who stood with his wife to receive the guests. Poor Mrs. Lancaster thought this a very trying ordeal; which to salute first, and how to do it gracefully, she did not in the least understand; she gave two abrupt nods, and her face was redder than her gown, when she was half pulled, half led to a chair by Evelyn and Dot. Conscious that she had not acquitted herself creditably, she tried to hide her confusion behind a large crimson fan. Mr. Hope was busy greeting one and another acquaintance.

Evelyn, her hands clasped and an intent expression on her face, sat listening to every name, as the stream of men and women flowed past the President.

'Do come and see something scientific, or

have some tea,' urged Dot, in a whisper at length, pulling Evelyn's sleeve. 'I'm tired of looking at the dresses; besides, we shall see them just as well in the other rooms.'

Dresses! Evelyn was not looking at dresses. The names announced were of more interest to her than all the milliners' establishments in the world, that of Worth himself included. The visionary heroes of the realm in which she lived—mere names hitherto—took tangible shape now and again as she listened. For among the list of nobodies would occur here and there the name of a poet, an artist, a philosopher, a literary man, known and revered by the girl for the sake of his work, and then she would fasten her gaze upon him with eagerness. To see all these people, of whom she had hitherto only heard, was an unspeakable delight, and she felt herself living in a new world as she sat there. But there was one name for which she listened more than any other. At length it came.

'Mrs. Allingham West,' and an imperceptible movement ran through the room, while the President's welcome was obviously marked in greeting a tall, slight lady with great, black eyes, and a pale, thoughtful face. This was Evelyn's idol! The successful novelist of the season, she had leapt into fame by the publication of a Romance—a story, half of this world, half of an imaginary region, where the natural and supernatural were strangely mingled. It was the work of a poet, and Evelyn thought it

perfect. She had dreamt night and day of seeing Mrs. West, and if she had proved stout and commonplace, the girl felt she could not have borne the shock. But this *spirituelle* personality could be reconciled without difficulty with the pages of *Transmigrations*.

Oh, if she could only speak to her! Her ardent gaze seemed to devour the authoress as she moved along, accosting one and another of the men and women who thronged about her way.

‘What is the matter, Evelyn?’ exclaimed Dot.

‘Didn’t you hear? Didn’t you see? That is Mrs. Allingham West!’

‘Well, and what then? Who’s she?’

‘Dottie, how can you? Why, she’s the great authoress! Every one is worshipping her genius!’ cried the ardent girl.

‘Oh, I know; she wrote that stupid book with the grey and silver cover—*Transmigrations*. I couldn’t read half of it.’

Evelyn, in the strained tension of her nerves, felt she could bear no more. But her aunt struck in with,—

‘Well, I don’t call her much to look at, after all, nor yet to make such a fuss about, my dear, just because she has written a tale. I couldn’t read it, any more than Dottie. I’ll be bound she thinks herself wonderfully clever; but there’s many a one cleverer. Why, you yourself, Evelyn——’

Evelyn rose, and turning to her uncle, who

stood near with amused and cynical countenance, breathed,—

‘Do take me, uncle—there—after her—I want to be near her.’

Mr. Hope complied, and led his niece into the library, where all along the wall the men of science sat, each with his special exhibit in his little nook. The wonderful ways of ants, flies, spiders, and bees, the effect of sound on colour and form, the latest improvement in telegraphy illustrated by a model, the forms of crystals—all such marvels were shown forth and explained by their exhibitors to any who would listen.

The right effect of true knowledge is a great patience and a great humility. This was apparent in the gentleness and modesty with which these men, many of them famous all over Europe, responded to silly questions, and strove to teach what they could respecting the wonders of Nature in a momentary conversation with the curious. Evelyn deigned but little attention, and tried to drag her uncle on when he paused to address a gentleman who presided over a microscope.

‘We shall lose her, uncle! We shall lose her!’

‘Lose her! What does the girl mean?’ inquired her uncle, throwing his head back and addressing his question to the ceiling.

‘Mrs. Allingham West, of course! I want to hear her speak. I want to be near her.’

‘Look through this microscope first. Let me introduce my niece—Professor Grant.’

With a very bad grace Evelyn stooped to look through the lens adjusted for her by the good-natured man of science.

‘I can’t see anything at all,’ she declared, ‘unless it’s a bit of my own eyelash.’

‘My niece’s tastes are literary, not scientific,’ observed Mr. Hope, rather grimly; ‘and just now she is hot in pursuit of Mrs. Allingham West.’

‘It would be a shame to detain her,’ declared the kindly professor, with a smile, and the two moved on in the stream.

Evelyn caught a glimpse of the silken draperies of her idol in the distance, and fairly pushed her way along till she was close behind her. Oh, happiness! she was speaking to the gentleman with an order on his breast, on whose arm she was leaning. Evelyn strained her ear to catch the enchanted sounds. Could it be true that she really heard the voice of her adored author? The next sensation was a chill of disappointment, for these were the words she overheard,—

‘It is very hot and crowded here. Suppose we go into the tea-room.’ And away swept the goddess in quest of nectar.

Evelyn, over-excited as she was, felt inclined to cry, and slackened her pace.

‘Well, what’s the matter now? Are you tired of mobbing that poor woman?’ asked her uncle.

‘Mobbing her! Uncle! How can you? I worship her!’

‘An odd way of showing it, then, to try to crush her to death. Come and let us see what your aunt and cousin are doing, if you have had enough worship,’ rejoined his satirical voice.

Evelyn could never quite ‘get on’ with this uncle. Until she came of age, a year ago, he had been conjointly her guardian with Mrs. Lancaster. There was little sympathy—only tolerance on the one side, awe on the other—between these widely dissimilar relatives of the orphan girl. Austin Hope lived in his own house at Kensington. A bachelor, and absorbed in his favourite pursuits, he could exercise little influence over the girl’s life; he laughed at the unintellectual Mrs. and Miss Lancaster, but secretly thought them excellent companions for a romantic creature of sentiment, as he supposed Evelyn to be. He had little patience with her impulsiveness, her lack of accuracy, and scarcely rendered justice to the gifts that existed side by side with many blemishes.

They found Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie at last, not where they had left them, but enduring the loud splitting and flashing of a practical illustration of lightning. Mrs. Lancaster’s expression of dismay as she sat collapsed in a chair, staring round-eyed at the electric fire darting from one great knob to another, gave little indication of her delight in the pursuit of science. The two ladies were not alone. A tall, loose-limbed gentleman, with a brown

beard and a mass of rough curly hair, was bending over them, trying to make his voice heard through the din.

'There's Muir trying to instruct your aunt,' cried Mr. Hope.

Then followed greetings and introductions, in which Evelyn observed the stranger had very bright eyes, so bright they seemed to form a line of light beneath his brow when he spoke, and that his smile was brilliant, showing white and even teeth. His dress, though spotless in respect to linen, was by no means of the latest cut, and his appearance was generally shaggy. He spoke with a Scotch accent.

'Evelyn has been disenchanted about her idol, Mrs. Allingham West,' remarked Mr. Hope, as by his suggestion the party of five withdrew to quieter regions. 'Would you believe it, the ignoble creature actually wanted tea, like any other human being? And it was all the worse because Evelyn had refused to look at Professor Grant's microscopic slides, only to hear the remark, "Come out of this mob," or something of the kind.'

Evelyn flushed again.

'I am not disenchanted,' she declared; 'and I would rather see Mrs. West than a hundred slides.'

'Indeed!' responded the Scotchman, with an air of interest and surprise. 'You admire her book?'

'Of course I do,' replied Evelyn. 'Everybody does.'

'I'm not so sure of that,' replied her new acquaintance. 'I don't altogether myself.'

'Perhaps your tastes are more scientific than literary,' inquired Evelyn, a little disdainfully.

'May I ask in which direction yours lie?' replied he.

'Oh, in the direction of literature. Thought is spiritual, and science is material,' declared Evelyn, conscious that she was saying a very fine thing indeed.

The Scotchman held his peace after this astounding remark, though he looked as if he could have spoken.

There was a good deal more sight-seeing, followed by refreshments, and then the little party from the distant suburb were put into their brougham by the two gentlemen.

The evening had been one of stirring emotions for Evelyn, and all the way home she mused. She had recovered the shock of finding out that Mrs. West wanted tea like any other human being, and she dwelt with rapture upon her looks—upon the evident homage she won from all. Before she laid her head on the pillow that night she drew from her desk certain sheets of manuscript tied together with pink ribbon at the corner, and read some of their contents with a kindling eye.

All the next morning Evelyn was busy in the pretty boudoir she called her own, reading, arranging, correcting the said manuscript sheets. She enjoyed strict privacy in this apartment, but frequently invited Dot to see her there. No

such invitation came to-day till the hour of afternoon tea, when the cousins met. Mrs. Lancaster had gone out for a drive.

‘What have you been doing, shut up all this lovely morning?’ inquired Dottie, standing by the table to pour out the tea from the tiny Japanese teapot.

‘I was busy writing—copying,’ responded Evelyn. ‘Dot, I want to tell you something. I have made up my mind on a very important subject since last night.’

‘Dear me! what is that?’ cried Dottie, pausing with her hand on the cream jug.

And Evelyn, conscious of the magnitude of her communication, solemnly replied,—

‘I have made up my mind to publish!’

CHAPTER II.

POET AND PUBLISHER.

And so, like most young poets, in a flush
Of individual life I poured myself
Along the veins of others, and achieved
Mere lifeless imitations of live verse,
And made the living answer for the dead.

Mrs. Browning.

To 'make up one's mind to publish' is a step frequently taken by young authors; and so far as the determination goes, it is both easy and agreeable. There are, however, further steps necessary in the matter beyond the author's private decision, and it is commonly with these that the difficulty arises. Publishers are proverbially hard to convince of untried merit, and, though they are ever on the watch for what is really good and original, they have to be sure that what is offered to them is worth their purchase-money. This very simple fact is often overlooked by the inexperienced, who think that a publisher's inveterate antagonism to publishing anything is only to be overcome by letters of introduction from somebody of consequence. It never occurs to them that publishing is the publisher's business, as much as doctoring is a doctor's business; that he wants to practise his calling as much as other men want to practise theirs, and is only anxious to do it satisfactorily.

Dottie looked at Evelyn with her round dark brown eyes rounder than ever, and an expression of awe upon her bonny face.

‘Shall you really? Oh, how splendid to have an authoress for my cousin! But what has made you decide that?’

‘Last night was the turning-point,’ replied Evelyn. ‘I can’t tell you, Dottie—and if I could, you wouldn’t understand—what I felt at hearing those illustrious names—names of men whose thoughts I have here.’ She pointed to her well-filled bookshelves. ‘And, above all, when Mrs. Allingham West came in—to see how she was followed and courted, what an influence she has exerted, all through that one book! What were the men of science to *her*? People cared more to look at her than to see all the slides and diagrams in the world. She helps to make the thought of her age, that is the reason. Now I feel I must do the same. Uncle will laugh at me—I am prepared for that—but I don’t care. I choose a literary life!’

To Dottie, who thought her cousin unutterably clever, beautiful, and fascinating, there was something grand in this announcement. She really felt as though Evelyn were in a sense a heroine, renouncing rank, fashion, amusement, for the sake of a noble career. She gazed solemnly at her lovely, animated face.

‘But you will not write for money, will you?’ she inquired.

Certainly not,’ returned Evelyn, with dignity; ‘it is not necessary, and I should not

think of it for a moment in any case. I have been looking over my poems all the morning, and I shall take them to a publisher at once; I think I shall call them *Day-dreams*.'

'And by what name shall you call yourself?' inquired Dottie.

'Espérance; Hope, you know—that will be most suitable in every way. Oh, to see myself in print! How enchanting! Dottie, I have dreamt of it all these years!' And Evelyn rose to fling her arms round her little cousin, who warmly returned her embrace.

'I shall never be clever like you, Evelyn, but I am proud of you,' cried the warm-hearted girl. 'I wonder what Algy will say?'

'Algy' was Dottie's only brother, who, after his Oxford life, was disporting himself in a lengthened tour upon the Continent.

'Algy? Oh, I don't suppose he will take any interest in it,' lightly responded Evelyn. 'Nothing poetical is in his line, as you know. Why should you trouble to tell him anything about it?'

The carriage wheels were heard, and the girls went down to greet Mrs. Lancaster, returning from her round of calls.

Evelyn's lot was certainly cast in pleasant places. The luxurious house in which she lived with her aunt and cousin stood in spacious grounds on a hill in a south-western suburb. The rumble of carts and carriages along the high road came but with distant murmur across the park to the ears of the dwellers in that

great square pile, solid, substantial, telling of wealth in every detail, within and without.

A charming flower-garden surrounded the house, and tall elms in the park were musical with the cawing of rooks. The charms of country and town met in one, for along the road on which the lodge gates opened, Mrs. Lancaster's well-appointed carriage could bowl on its C springs to the West End in less than an hour, a fact which the good lady constantly rehearsed to those friends who wondered at her for living out in the Surrey suburbs. She was secretly convinced that she should die if she were shut up in one of the stony West End squares; and both Evelyn and Dottie loved their home. They loved the wide, open commons, with their glory of gorse, their noble forest trees standing here and there, the pageant of the sunset sky spread freely out to them across that far expanse; and not for all the fashion in the world would the girls have exchanged the freedom and airiness of their surroundings. One little flaw, and one alone, there was in Evelyn's lot. Imaginative and receptive, she would have liked to be more closely encircled by intellectual and artistic society. Mrs. Lancaster and Dot would not have cared for it, had it been within reach, and the glimpses Evelyn could get were few and far between in comparison with her ambition.

'When I publish,' thought the girl, 'that will be altered. I shall obtain the *entrée* into the world of authors, and talk to all those people I

saw last night on equal terms, instead of being a little nobody from Surrey.'

'Has Evelyn told you, mother, of her determination?' asked Dot, after dinner. She was sitting on the balcony that opened from the drawing-room, with her Japanese umbrella. The low sunlight gleamed on the waters of a pool in the park—much celebrated in the neighbourhood—which was almost, but not quite, large enough to be called a lake, and which in the winter afforded untold delight to the skating community. The girl made a pretty picture, with her kitten nestling in her lap, and this background illumined by the westering sun. Evelyn sat near the window with clasped hands and a rapt expression, gazing at the sunset.

Instead of replying, Mrs. Lancaster, stout and good-humoured, made a remark she repeated at least twice every fine day.

'Really, now, one might suppose we were a hundred miles from town.'

'Darling mother, what has that got to do with Evelyn?' responded Dottie, arching her dark eyebrows; and Mrs. Lancaster smiled sleepily. Her niece's determinations were not of much interest, as a rule, to her after dinner.

'I am going to publish a book, auntie,' declared the girl, in clear, distinct tones.

'Good gracious, my dear!' cried Mrs. Lancaster, drawing herself suddenly upright. 'Whatever will your uncle say?'

'I don't care what my uncle says!' rejoined Evelyn, a little haughtily. 'I am my own

mistress now, and I want the carriage to-morrow morning, auntie, if you don't mind, to go to the City.'

To Mrs. Lancaster's mind, publishing was connected somehow or other with poverty, dying prematurely in a garret, Grub Street, insolent patrons, and so forth. It struck her as altogether incongruous, if not improper, that a young lady, good-looking, accomplished, with money of her own, and friends willing to support her in comfort, should write books; and she began to look round for some illustration that would at once alarm and deter Evelyn. Dr. Johnson, who used once to come to a spot not many miles away to see Mrs. Thrale—hadn't he, now, said something about a woman writing a book, that would be just the thing to impress her niece? Mrs. Lancaster had a dim recollection of dancing bears in the observation; but how and why was that comparison introduced? The poor lady hurriedly searched her memory, and so far succeeded as to say, half timorously,—

'Don't you remember that Dr. Johnson called a lady who had written a book a dancing bear?'

'He was a bear himself,' returned Evelyn, rather startled at this sudden thrust; 'but I don't remember anything of the sort; and if I did, I shouldn't care what Dr. Johnson said—rude old thing.'

'Well, I know he said, "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all,"' persisted the good lady, whose reverence for

the great Lexicographer was one of the few results of her somewhat desultory education, and who was resolved to make her point.

Dottie, highly entertained at the little scene, and yet sorry for Evelyn, cried out from her balcony,—

‘Darling mother, you are all wrong; it was about a woman preaching Dr. Johnson said that; and it wasn’t a bear either that he brought into the comparison.’

‘Well, I know he did disapprove of young ladies publishing verses, and said something of the sort,’ protested Mrs. Lancaster, whose attempts at impressing her young people by quotations usually ended in failure.

‘Whatever it was, it isn’t to the point now, is it?’ retorted Evelyn. ‘You know, auntie, how fond I have always been of writing, and I cannot help thinking my last poems are quite good enough to publish; so I am going to town, if you will let me, to-morrow, to Messrs. Wrexham and Bird. I have made up my mind to go, so do be kind and nice about it, there’s a dear.’

Poor Mrs. Lancaster could never seriously resist her niece; besides, Evelyn’s talent for original composition had long been an acknowledged household fact. No thought entered the good woman’s mind but that the girl was fully competent to enter the lists of authors. Her objection rose rather from the idea that it was decent to practise feminine talents within a certain charmed circle, and surround their exercise with reserve. However, she yielded,

of course; and the next day, with a beating heart, Evelyn was driving citywards.

When she actually entered the sanctum of the great man whose acquaintance with her uncle had won her admission to his presence, her agitation seemed as though it would suffocate her for the moment. He sat in a very little room, before a very large table, and appeared, she thought, to regard her with a certain fatherly compassion from behind his spectacles.

‘Yes, Mr. Hope is an intimate friend of mine,’ he responded to Evelyn’s faltering introduction. ‘Does he know, may I ask, of your visit to me?’

‘No; I do not think my uncle cares about my writing poetry,’ she answered, trying to smile.

‘Poetry? Ah, yes,’ observed Mr. Wrexham, taking the dainty packet Evelyn held out to him, and turning the leaves. ‘Most young authors begin with poetry; but it’s not always wise to publish it—not always wise. Have you written anything else?’

‘I have always been writing, more or less; it is my favourite occupation,’ returned Evelyn, attempting to pluck up dignity. ‘This is by no means my first attempt.’

‘I suppose you have had no experience of print?’ asked the publisher. ‘Do you know that this would make a very small volume indeed?’

‘I don’t wish it to be large. I have no ambition to issue great books,’ returned Evelyn grandly. ‘My idea is a delicate binding—very thick paper—plenty of margin.’

‘Quality, not quantity,’ remarked the publisher pleasantly ; and she hated him for saying it. ‘Poetry is just now a drug in the market,’ he went on ; ‘nothing but the best will sell ; and I should be doing wrong, Miss Hope, if I led you to believe we could offer you anything for these poems.’

‘I do not wish to be paid,’ responded Evelyn.

‘You are fortunate ; but we could not even issue them at our own risk, paying you nothing.’

‘Cannot you read them before deciding that?’ asked Evelyn, who considered herself business-like, and felt she ought to stand up for her rights. She had always understood that publishers required a great deal of brow-beating, if authors dare only exercise it.

The publisher in question smiled pitifully. He had glanced at the poems—as Oliver Wendell Holmes somewhat prosaically says, the buyer does not need to eat, but only to taste, a cheese before purchasing it. He saw that, while they were not wholly bad, they were far removed from being good ; that they were the first crude attempts of talent, expressing for the most part borrowed thought in borrowed phraseology ; correct as to metre and rhyme, very passable as amateur work, but, as yet, nothing more. He also—for he was a shrewd and kindly man—saw that the advice he would willingly have given to the elegant young lady before him would be distasteful and disregarded. Still, he made an effort, out of sheer good nature.

‘I think I have read something like this

before, Miss Hope,' he said; and, turning a leaf, he read aloud:—

“When autumn winds blow chill and drear,
And dropping leaves are whirled away,
And crimson glows the parting day,
Full sadly wanes the waning year.”

‘Is not that rather like an imitation of *In Memoriam*? In poetry it is especially necessary in these days to be original, if the poet wishes to find readers.’

‘That is not the best poem by any means,’ hurriedly interposed Evelyn.

‘No, probably not; and I have no wish to discourage you. You have plenty of time before you, and I should say, as Mr. Hope would, I am sure—Wait awhile.’

‘Thank you. I need not trouble you any further,’ said Evelyn, rising, with rage and mortification at her heart. She did not choose to suggest that Messrs. Wrexham and Bird should bring out the volume at her expense; and as they would probably have declined to do so, she was wise. She was provided with a second string to her bow, for she had furnished herself beforehand with all the information she could collect, and ere long she was mounting some narrow stairs, to see a member of the firm of Messrs. Dalrymple and Co.

Here a very different reception awaited her. The stout, round-faced gentleman, with the little twinkling eyes, after a rapid survey of her appearance, glanced through the manuscript, and seemed to read a poem here and there.

‘Very nice; very pretty indeed!’ he remarked approvingly. ‘This “Sonnet to, the East Wind” is capital!’

‘*South* wind,’ put in Evelyn.

‘Ah, well, just so. We have a good deal of poetry on hand just now, that is the only thing; but we could bring out an edition of five hundred for you—that will do to begin with—easily get a second edition out when it is wanted—if you felt inclined to risk from £30 to £50. Little doubt—I should say *no* doubt—but that you would recoup yourself amply out of the profits of sale, and——’

‘Oh, money is not my object,’ put in Evelyn, charmed at this change of view; and she was very soon deep in the discussion of binding, paper, and print.

As she was driving home, she did not feel wholly satisfied with the result of her morning’s work. She knew that Messrs. Wrexham and Bird occupied a far higher position in the publishing world than Messrs. Dalrymple and Co. She would like to have seen Mr. Wrexham fall back in his chair; to have heard him exclaim: ‘This indeed is genius! My dear young lady, you have a great future before you!’ On the contrary, he evidently did not think much of the poems; but then, as Evelyn had remarked in one of them entitled ‘*Misunderstood*,’ the poet soul is not, as a rule, appreciated by the common herd.

To this she, in self-defence, supposed Mr. Wrexham, in spite of his eminence, must belong.

CHAPTER III.

RUSHING INTO PRINT.

Life is a leaf of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.

Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime,—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime

J. Russell Lowell.

A WEEK after the memorable episode of the visit to the publishers, Evelyn's boudoir presented an unusually gay appearance.

It was always a pretty place, with its odd mixture of Japanese and European decoration—its fans and sketches on the walls, bamboo tables standing about, palms in blue pots, flowers in china bowls and specimen glasses, bits of Oriental tapestry; its piano and bookshelves. To-day, about a dozen girls in their light summer frocks added grace and brightness to the scene.

Although Evelyn was not surrounded by the literary and artistic clique after which her soul hankered, she had a sprinkling of girl friends in the neighbourhood—the daughters of local professional men or wealthy London merchants—who were in some sense congenial, and over whom she honestly tried to exercise an influence for good, collecting them into a society

for discussion and reading. This was one of the sessions of the Somerville Club. At a table Evelyn, as president, was enthroned, with papers and ink before her, an important look on her face, while Dottie, unusually solemn and intent, sat by her side, holding a manuscript volume.

‘The last meeting of the Somerville Debating Club,’ read Dot, in a preternaturally business-like tone, ‘was held on May 9. Miss Lancaster was appointed Secretary, *vice* Miss Smith retired. Fifteen members were present. The minutes were read and confirmed.

‘Miss Hope then read a paper supporting the proposition that all professions should be thrown open to women. A discussion followed——’

‘But you haven’t put down any of my arguments,’ interrupted Evelyn, *sotto voce*.

The minutes had begun well, and were now falling off alarmingly.

‘I couldn’t remember them,’ whispered Dot ruefully. ‘Some thought one way, some another—then there was a vote, and the original proposition was carried by 11 to 4.’

Until a short time ago Dottie had insisted that she was not clever enough to have anything to do with the society. Evelyn had carried the day in persuading her little cousin to accept the post of secretary, and she had evolved the minutes out of her own idea as to what was fitting, without consulting the president.

‘We usually have rather fuller minutes both

of the paper and discussion,' said Evelyn, smiling benignly round ; 'but this is my cousin's first experience. Do you confirm these minutes as they stand ? Thank you ; then I will call upon Miss Joycè to open the question of the day—" Does Tennyson or Mrs. Browning present the truer ideal of womanhood ?" Take notes, Dottie.'

The latter words were uttered in a severe undertone, and Dottie, stopping midway in the smile she was directing towards a friend across the room, blushed guiltily, seized a sheet of paper, and began to write with much show of diligence.

The paper was very good as far as it went. Tennyson's *Princess* was brought forward and contrasted with *Aurora Leigh*. There were a great many quotations, and the speaker ended by declaring that in her opinion Mrs. Browning bore away the palm for appreciation of the needs and ambitions of her sex.

'Will Miss Willoughby read her paper ?' requested Evelyn ; and the upholder of Tennyson took up the tale.

The well-known lines at the close of the *Princess* were quoted as embodying the true aims and hopes of women, and various characters from the *Idylls of the King* were brought on the scene. Miss Willoughby, a slight, fair girl, evidently agreed entirely that woman's chief aim was to

'—set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words,'

and extolled the Laureate's view. Dottie listened round-eyed, with suspended pencil, till recalled to her note-taking by a nudge from the president's elbow.

The paper closed, and, after a short pause, one and another began to make remarks. Evelyn, from her presidential chair, listened, put in a word now and again, called the members to order when, as frequently happened, two or three of them were talking at once; and whenever her voice was heard it won instant attention and respect. The debate had, perhaps, little intrinsic value; the point to be settled was not of sovereign importance—indeed, was scarcely susceptible of decision one way or the other; but the question had the good effect of bringing out the thoughts of members, and it had made them study their authors beforehand. At the close Evelyn enunciated her own views. Tennyson and Mrs. Browning could not be expected to look at the question from the same point—their sex made the difference; their ideal was, after all, much the same—far in advance of our grandmothers' ideal; but while Tennyson regarded woman more as a complement to man, Mrs. Browning was better able to conceive of her as an individual, competent of individual development whether she married or not. 'Therefore,' concluded the president, with an air, 'I regard Mrs. Browning as presenting by far the nobler picture of womanhood.'

'What made you so awfully clever?' whis-

pered Dottie, quoting from *Alice in Wonderland*, as Evelyn closed her speech; but disregarding this levity, the president called for a vote. Only three members ventured to disagree with her, and Mrs. Browning triumphantly carried the day.

The session broke up, and the girls closed about their favourite Evelyn, renewing the discussion in an informal way, begging for the loan of some volume from her well-stocked library; asking what such and such an expression meant, and suggesting new topics for debate. They were no select coterie from Girton or Newnham, but merely ordinary suburban girls, endowed with a fair average of brains, and of necessity possessing some taste for literature.

Dottie was conversing in a corner with a new friend of hers, Emily Thorne, a merry brunette with vivacious, dark eyes.

‘Yes, I have only just been appointed secretary, and how to write minutes I haven’t the faintest idea. All those grand business-like expressions I copied out of a book. Look at my notes now. I can’t read them! but Evelyn made me be secretary. She is awfully clever, and makes me do anything. I feel such a little goose beside her. I can’t think how it is she came to have such stupid relatives.’

‘Where does she get her literary tastes from?’ inquired Miss Thorne.

‘Oh, from her father. He used to write in the *Fortnightly*, ages before we were born.

But her mother wasn't clever at all, and was different in every way. We are on her mother's side, you know,' declared Dottie. 'Her uncle on the father's side, Mr. Hope, is quite different from us, and thinks us the veriest idiots on the face of the earth. But——'

Here a little murmur was audible from the group round Evelyn, and Dottie stopped short in her family chronicle, ejaculating, 'She's telling them!'

'Yes, I am going to publish a book,' broke in Evelyn's clear voice. 'It will be called *Day-dreams*, and will contain the poems I have lent some of you to read.'

'Oh, Evelyn, darling! How lovely! How splendid!' broke from the bevy of girls; and one plain little creature, with a stoop in her shoulders, who adored her brilliant friend, murmured, with tears in her eyes: 'You will outshine them all yet; I know it. Oh, I hope I shall live to see it.'

'You are too partial, Bertha,' responded Evelyn, greatly pleased. 'I don't look for fame or money. You remember, girls, what Wordsworth says:—

"'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts."

That is all my ambition.'

Evelyn did not as a rule quote poetry in conversation, but her emotions, quickened by the intellectual exercise of the debate, were strongly roused; the colour in her cheek, the light in her eye, showed that she was living

intensely. It was a moment of concentrated experience, and it seemed to her as if the glorification and delight she received from her little circle were a foretaste of a wider renown. It was a shock like that of a sudden douche-bath to hear a well-known masculine voice observe, in measured tones, 'All her ambition, does the child say? Well, well!'

Evelyn, standing with her back to the door, had not heard her uncle enter; but there he stood, looking with an expression of quiet amusement on the bevy of girls. He seemed to his excited niece just then like an embodiment of masculine scorn at feminine effort. His slim, athletic, well-brushed figure, his grizzled hair and grey moustache laid across his lip, his keen grey eyes, had nothing poetic about them, Evelyn thought, with irritation; and now he had come to overhear her poetic quotation and ridicule her aspirations! It was with difficulty she controlled herself sufficiently to greet him, and observe,—

'You came in upon us just at the close of a debate, Uncle Austin.'

'Pray do not let me disturb any of the proceedings,' he replied, seating himself. 'I presume you do not meet with closed doors; may not a masculine outsider be enlightened by some of your "scattered sapience"?''

But the girls were dispersing already, in the unexplained consciousness that a hostile element had come into the scene; and Evelyn was shortly left alone with her uncle.

‘So your ambition is only “in summer shade, to pipe a simple song for thinking hearts”?’ inquired Mr. Hope. ‘I am glad, at any rate, you aim no higher than Wordsworth, my dear. If it had been Shakespeare or Goethe you wished to emulate—well, one might have been a little doubtful of the result of your attempts, but only Wordsworth!—oh, that’s a simple matter enough.’

‘You are laughing at me, uncle, just because I am going to publish my poems, as I suppose auntie has told you,’ replied Evelyn, nerving herself for the fray; ‘but every author must have a beginning; why not I?’

Mr. Hope’s rejoinder was certainly direct enough, making up in frankness what it lacked in compliment.

‘My dear child, do you consider your poems are worth paper and print?’

This was too much.

‘Every one to whom I have lent them or read them says so,’ retorted Evelyn, in scarlet indignation. ‘The vicar reads one every now and then at our Penny Readings, and the people always applaud. All my friends about here say they are worth publishing. I would not hear of it for a long time, but now I am two and twenty; I am not a child. I take the opinion of those competent to judge.’

‘And Mr. Wrexham—what said he?’

‘Oh,’ returned Evelyn, with a sudden distinct and disagreeable recollection of her interview, ‘he said—what I suppose they generally do say.’

What a consolation if she could only have dazzled this cynical uncle with a glowing report from the head of the well-known firm! She did not somehow care to quote Mr. Dalrymple.

As Mr. Hope lifted his eyebrows inquiringly, Evelyn went on in desperation,—

‘Why, uncle, you know Milton got five pounds for *Paradise Lost*. Thackeray couldn’t find a publisher for *Vanity Fair*——’

‘Good gracious! does the girl compare herself with such men as THOSE?’ cried Mr. Hope, lifting his eyes to the ceiling.

‘No, no!’ ejaculated Evelyn, almost crying with vexation; ‘but if they—so much the more I. Why should I expect to be differently treated?’

‘My dear girl, listen to me,’ said her uncle, suddenly assuming a graver tone. ‘I have no authority over you now, I know that well enough; but still, your father was my only brother, and that’s some sort of a claim for interest, isn’t it? I don’t like to see you do what is silly. You are relying on the verdict of friends, who are always partial—at least, nearly always,’ interjected Mr. Hope, who recollected that *he* could scarcely be deemed partial. ‘Your poems, from what your aunt has shown me, are really not worth publication.’

‘How dare she show you!’ cried Evelyn, in hot indignation, remembering the copy she had made for Mrs. Lancaster of certain ‘Lines to a Faded Flower.’

‘What? rush into print, and yet object to *one* critical individual seeing what you write? That’s logical. What’s the title, child? *Nightmares*, isn’t it?’

‘*Day-dreams!*’ cried the poor authoress furiously.

‘Oh, *Day-dreams!* I knew it was something of the sort. Now I am going to offer you some advice, Evelyn; you will not take it, I know, and will think me a brute into the bargain, but it is this. Wait awhile. Write poetry if you like, but burn it afterwards. Meanwhile, if you really wish to follow in your poor father’s steps, study — study — study. Study the best living masters of style; get their thoughts into your brain; use your pen for practice only; then in time you may do something.’

‘But I have arranged to have my poems issued by Messrs. Dalrymple and Co., and very soon too,’ replied Evelyn obstinately.

‘I’ll not ask how much it is going to cost you; but come now—would you consent if I could stop it?’

‘Oh no, no, uncle! I have told my friends; it would break my heart,’ replied Evelyn piteously.

‘Well, if you like to waste money in that way, it isn’t my business; and if you will not take my advice, I cannot help it,’ declared Mr. Hope, rising with a certain dry air that showed he was displeased. ‘I am always sorry to see an intelligent girl like you rushing into folly;

but there's one comfort—you might do worse. I wish in future you would remember that I am willing enough to counsel you on these matters; your aunt and cousin are not "in it," as regards literature, that I know; but my life and experience might count for something, even to so wise a young lady as yourself.'

'Ask *you* for advice? no, indeed!' thought Evelyn, whose whole being was up in arms against this brusque treatment. She scarcely heard her uncle's farewells, nor his inquiry when they meant to start for Switzerland. She wanted him to go, to get away out of her presence—this embodiment of hostile criticism. When she heard the front door slam behind him, she gasped for joy.

'Wretched, wretched man! how came he to be my father's brother?' thought she impetuously.

Mr. Hope's bachelor life had not fitted him to be counsellor to an ardent and impulsive girl, and his method was too severe to be effectual. Criticism needs to be tempered with sympathy to an ardent young creature who is honestly striving with all her might to do something worth the doing; to be no mere idle, frivolous trifler, but to help others towards enlightenment. Evelyn had a high ideal of life. She believed that her gifts, of which she could not be unconscious, were talents entrusted to her by her Maker, for which she would one day have to give an account to Him. She believed she had the poetic faculty, and she was deter-

mined that she would not let it lie dormant. That she overrated her powers, and was premature in offering their results to the public, was not altogether her own fault, poor child. Many and many a girl has done the same, with less ground for self-delusion. Foolish and vain as she was, she might have been more inclined to listen to wise advice if mingled with the sympathy that, after all, is the meed of such young souls striving to impress themselves upon their day and generation.

CHAPTER IV.

IS SHE A POET ?

My own best poets, am I one with you,
That thus I love you—or but one through love ?
Does all this smell of thyme about my feet
Conclude my visit to your holy hill
In personal presence, or but testify
The rustling of your vesture through my dreams
With influent odours ?

Mrs. Browning.

Is pleasant, sure, to see oneself in print.’
With eager eyes Evelyn watched for
her first proofs. Her book was to be
hurried through the press, that she might
see it complete before the projected departure
of herself, Mrs. and Miss Lancaster, to Switzer-
land early in August. There was so little of
it, it would not take long to set up, the publisher
had assured her.

One morning at breakfast-time the anxiously-
expected packet arrived. Evelyn seized it
with kindling eyes, and broke the wrapper.
Yes ! there were her own verses on the long
strips of paper.

‘Your poems ? Oh, do let me see !’ cried
Dottie, rushing round to peep over her cousin’s
shoulder. ‘How lovely they look ! You
needn’t push me away, Evelyn. But what is
this ?—

“Far, far and wide resound amain
The tuneful snores of Arcady.”

And Dottie burst into a peal of laughter.

‘How stupid you are, Dot!’ replied Evelyn, a little crossly; ‘can’t you see it ought to be *shores*? Of course there will be mistakes; there always are in proofs.’

The embryo authoress gathered up her papers and departed to her own little sanctum in mid-breakfast.

‘Dot! Dot!’ said Mrs. Lancaster reprov-ingly, ‘your spirits run away with you, my dear; you have quite put your cousin out.’

‘She’ll soon come round again, mother dear,’ responded the imperturbable Dottie; ‘it did look so funny, I really could not help laughing.’

‘Well, she is a very clever girl, and in the main a very good one; I will say that for her,’ observed Mrs. Lancaster; ‘but her uncle doesn’t like this publishing at all. “You ought to exercise more control over her,” said he to me as plain as plain could be the other morning when he called, and you were having your debating society upstairs. But I told him straight out that I couldn’t do it; she’s too old and too set in her ways to be contradicted by me. I did show him her “Lines to a Faded Flower,” that she copied out because I liked them so, but he pished and pshawed like anything, and I’m afraid he and Evelyn didn’t get on at all well afterwards, for he went straight out of the house with a slam of the door, and never so much as a “good-morning” to me. These

people that are so clever in their intellects seem often a little short in their tempers,' moralised Mrs. Lancaster. 'Now there's Algy, dear fellow! you see he did nothing much at college, but he is the easiest and sweetest of tempers to get on with I ever did come across.'

Meanwhile Evelyn was feasting in blissful solitude upon her proof sheets. She had thoughtfully provided herself beforehand with an advertisement cut out of a magazine, of Macniven and Cameron's pens—a delightful advertisement that shows the tyro in publishing how to correct the many and manifold errors to which printers are liable. She had studied beforehand all the mystic signs and methods of correction, and now was hard at it. First, she flew with energy at the downright blunders that made nonsense of her verses, such as snores for shores, tight for light, morality for mortality; then, when these were deeply scored out, she had breath and leisure for the slighter errors of quotation marks, punctuation, dashes, and the like. It was a charming task, and a couple of hours soon passed away while she was engaged in it.

In the delight of seeing one's thoughts for the first time in print, there is surely something deeper than the gratification of mere foolish vanity. In the printed page there lies the symbol of that intercourse with the outer world, the world outside ourselves, that is a need of every human spirit. What constitutes the charm in sharing the enthusiasm of a mighty

multitude of which we form a part ? Is it not this participation in the thought of humanity ? We are not isolated atoms, but parts of a mighty whole, and whatever the barrier may be that sunders us from our fellows, there is an imperious need, now and again, to break it down.

Evelyn congratulated herself repeatedly that she had not complied with her uncle's wish, for her poems looked far better in print than they had done in manuscript ; and as she murmured them low to herself in lilting lines, the poor young authoress thought, ' These must and will win a hearing—some, at least, will appreciate them.'

Leaning back in her chair, pen in hand, she lost herself in dreaming over the reviews there would be, the second edition (possibly) called for, the letters she would receive from grateful and delighted readers. ' Yes, the author's life is worth living,' she said aloud ; and then she read through the poem entitled ' The Lark,' which, as it was about the best in the book, may be quoted as a specimen of her powers :—

Fain would I soar, but that I cannot rise.
 My wings refuse to bear me ; yet it seems
 I needs must strive to reach the far-off skies,
 The fields of air, the region of my dreams.
 With panting heart I sigh, and look, and long
 To quit the narrow bounds where life is spent ;
 To pour my heart forth in ascending song,
 Then sink awhile to rest, and satisfied content.

I have a nest among the quiet grass,
 Right soft and warm ; and dear it is to me ;

None do I know that can mine own surpass—
The nest is sweetest of all nests that be.
I love it well, nor lightly would I roam,
Yet, there enfolded, would not always stay ;
Constant my heart is to my little home,
And yet it breaks to soar far upward towards the day.

Will it be ever thus? or shall I find
Some heaven-sent moment when my wings are free,
When I can taste the ecstasy combined
Of upward flight, and earth-born ministry?
Then would my lot indeed be fully blest,
Then would my restless heart for aye be still,
When both in turn were mine—the happy nest,
And Heaven to sing in at mine own sweet will!

Evelyn had written these lines out of the fulness of her heart, when the contrast between the comfort of her home, the kindness of her relatives on the one hand, and her unsatisfied longings on the other, was more than usually keen. It was the best of her poems, just because it was sincere, while many others expressed emotion that she only knew at second-hand.

The package bore the word 'Immediate,' and Evelyn knew she dare not retain the proof sheets. She went out herself when she was quite sure she had corrected them to the uttermost detail, and posted them in the nearest post-office. No other hand might be trusted with such precious freight.

The same experience recurred for many days, with but brief intervals free from the delightful occupation of receiving proofs and correcting them. Then came a blank ; and at last, one

enchanting and never-to-be-forgotten morning, the carrier left a great package in the thickest of brown paper, with tenpence to pay.

There it was! a thin (a very thin) volume bound in white parchment, with a decorative design on the cover representing a gilt crescent moon and a few stars. The words *Day-dreams, by Espérance*, were sketched diagonally across in a very vague and poetic manner. The paper was as unusually thick as the book was unusually thin, and the rivulet of print filtered through immense shores of margin. Evelyn, in the seventh heaven of bliss, instantly presented a copy to Mrs. Lancaster, another to Dottie, and then, in the fulness of her heart, began with the upper servants.

‘I don’t know whether you’d like a copy of my poems, Ellis?’ she observed to the head parlourmaid.

That usually imperturbable personage relaxed into a smile and a look of wonder, as she said, ‘I’m sure I’m very much obliged, Miss.’

Both smile and look of wonder were delicious to Evelyn, who went on with her presentations till she began to see her first consignment of copies would not go very far at such a rate. The whole household was soon supplied with copies of *Day-dreams*; they lay thick as leaves about the servants’ hall. Let us hope the domestics read them; at any rate, they showed them to the tradesmen who called that day, with amusement and pride evenly mingled,

and much surprise that Miss Hope had chosen a cover that would soil so quickly.

Then followed the gifts to friends. On the next session of the debating society every member was formally presented with a copy. Evelyn might be sure of readers here! Only, unfortunately, nearly every one had already seen the poems in manuscript, or heard them recited at penny readings and literary societies. The kind vicar, who took a fatherly and an over-partial interest in Evelyn's efforts, was not forgotten; but when it became evident that every member of her large circle of friends expected the offering as a matter of course, the author demurred.

'I have given away thirty-two copies already,' she complained to Dottie; 'and did you notice how pointedly Mrs. Mills said this afternoon to auntie, she had not had the pleasure of reading it *yet*? Why can't she buy the book? It's only three and ninepence with the discount off.

But the last thing your friend will do for you, as Evelyn had yet to discover, is to buy the book you have written. He would gladly lavish money on you if you needed it; he has plenty to spare; but he will *not* devote three and ninepence to reducing the numbers of your first edition, and lending you glory in the eyes of local booksellers.

If you want him to read your book, he reflects, you ought to give it him; for (so it seems to him) you can, of course, command

unlimited copies free of all cost to yourself. This is one of the incidental circumstances of an author's career. -

But how delightful it all was! The topic of *Day-dreams* was the most charming that could present itself to the young author's ears. The oft-repeated congratulation never palled; she found herself listening for it whenever she met any one whom she had not seen since the book was published. If any of her friends who had read the poems would discuss them with her, she kindled into animation instantly. But such friends were few and far between. Indiscriminating praise was rather the rule in Evelyn's circle, and on the whole it was very delicious, though an occasional indication that they who praised had not read, slightly disturbed the author's complacency. She had numerous letters of thanks in return for the books she had sent by post, but they all ran: 'I am sure I shall greatly enjoy reading the poems.' All in the future tense! Why! oh, why could not recipients have waited a day or two, read the volume through, and sent a discriminating criticism (laudatory, of course) with their thanks? This could not but occur to Evelyn, but it seemed the rule to postpone reading the poems until the thanksgiving letter had been sent.

All this delightful little stir and excitement rather diverted Evelyn's mind from a coming event that filled Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie with anticipation—a projected visit to Switzerland, where Algy was to meet them, and after

which he proposed to return to England with his relatives, to begin his career at the Bar. Evelyn scarcely cared, intensely as she loved Switzerland, to leave the little scene of her triumphs.

One day, shortly before the date fixed for their departure, Dottie received a note at breakfast time, which caused her to exclaim :—

‘Bertha Maxwell wants us to go and spend a day with her on the Thames, Evelyn. She is longing to see you, she says, and talk over *Day-dreams*. She proposes to read your poems aloud, while I row. Here is the letter.’

Bertha Maxwell, already introduced at the Somerville Club as the plain, delicate girl who adored Evelyn, was staying at a village up the river with her parents for a few weeks. The prospect was alluring to the authoress, never sated with praise, and she accepted the invitation with alacrity.

The weather was lovely ; Evelyn was welcomed with effusion, and the three girls started forth after luncheon for a long afternoon and evening on the beautiful Thames. *Day-dreams* was safely in Bertha’s pocket.

‘What a comfort I can row!’ reflected Dottie. She was a good-natured girl, who heartily admired her cousin, but she was getting a little, just a little, weary of *Day-dreams*. Not so Bertha, whose adoration had been fed by many an act of thoughtful kindness on Evelyn’s part.

Dottie took both oars and sculled vigorously.

Evelyn undertook to steer. Bertha drew forth the beloved volume, and in her plaintive, musical voice began the well-known lines. The authoress abandoned herself to the delight of the moment. It was an exquisite August day ; the river gleamed like silver, a breeze ruffled its surface, the trees bent their wealth of foliage down into the water, the summer warmth made the cool rush down stream delicious to the dreaming senses. To recline like this, drinking in the beauties of Nature, to hear one's own poetry sympathetically read the while, to revel in vague visions of future brilliancy and success ; what could be more enchanting ? Evelyn was absorbed in the ecstasy of the moment, when—bang—thump ! came a violent collision, mingled with a sharp masculine exclamation. All three girls started in terror at the shock.

Dottie took in the situation at a glance. Their boat had run straight into a punt moored against the bank, from which a gentleman had been serenely fishing. Evelyn had absently tugged with her right arm, regardless of consequences. No damage was done to either craft, but the fisherman was obviously very angry at so gratuitous a blunder, and glared through his *pince-nez* at them as he busied himself with rod and line. Oh, horror ! it was no other than Evelyn's uncle, Mr. Austin Hope.

As this fact dawned on both parties, good breeding struggled with dismay on their side, annoyance on his.

'Well, Evelyn, my dear, you have frightened

away the fishes in good earnest. What a remarkable coincidence—a coincidence in more senses than one!’

Evelyn hastened to explain the fact of her appearance on the scene, and to express wonder at her uncle being there.

‘Oh, I often come down here for a day’s fishing, with a favourite book,’ he rejoined. ‘But mind you don’t get one of these collisions in mid-stream, or it will not be so slight a matter, unless you can all swim. Excuse my asking if you can manage a boat? Why doesn’t one of you steer?’

‘I was steering, uncle, but——’

‘I was reading aloud to Evelyn some of the poems we all love so dearly,’ put in poor little Bertha, hoping this would smooth matters down; and she offered the volume, with a smile, to Mr. Hope. Evelyn wished she could sink through the floor of the boat. Save us from our friends! Mr. Hope took it, glared for one brief moment at the ornamental cover, and handed it ceremoniously back to Bertha.

‘I quite understand now why my niece could not attend to her steering,’ he replied. ‘I should suggest that *she* read aloud, if you must have reading, and that somebody else took command of the tiller. The effect possibly would not be so engrossing in that case. At any rate, pray don’t get spilt, poems or no poems, or you will find your “day-dreams” come to rather a rough waking.’

It was of no use. He would not appreciate,

or be anything but extremely unkind, thought Evelyn bitterly, while, with the volume packed well out of sight, the trio rowed away.

Mr. Hope watched them with a curious little feeling of compunction, as the long narrow boat with its pretty load shot from his sight. He always seemed to get 'across' with Evelyn, yet in his way he was fond of his brother's only daughter. 'I was obliged to speak plainly to the little goose, or the whole three of them would have been in the Thames directly,' he reflected. 'When vanity's at stake, a woman is blind and deaf to everything else. "Day-dreams," indeed!'

CHAPTER V.

SWITZERLAND.

There the torrents drive upward
Their rock-strangled hum ;
There the avalanche thunders
The hoarse torrent dumb.
I come, O ye mountains !
Ye torrents, I come !

Matthew Arnold.

AWAY from England ! with the white cliffs receding gradually from view, the green waters churning into yeasty foam behind the good ship, the great hillocks of the Channel, so unlike in form to the conventional idea of a wave, rising and subsiding as the vessel cuts along ! There was a stiff breeze on the August morning when Mrs. Lancaster, Dorothy and Evelyn left Dover, and the sky was stormy ; but Evelyn delighted in the rough caresses of the wind and the tossing of the sea. She was a good sailor, and the fact increased the consciousness of general superiority to the average of her sex which had of late been gaining force in her mind. Happy, glowing with health, expectant of the coming delights of Swiss scenery, she made a pretty picture as she stood in her blue serge frock, all blown about on the upper deck, while Mrs. Lancaster, Dottie and

the maid were extended helpless in the ladies' cabin below.

The journey into Switzerland, *via* Laon, is no longer a novelty; and it is needless to describe how the travellers sped straight away from the Calais pier, through North-eastern France; and how the early morning broke upon the romantic gorges, climbing forests, and white cliffs of the Jura. At the busy station of Bâle they alighted for breakfast, and were soon off again *en route* for Lucerne.

They had chosen for a temporary resting-place, in preference to one of the large hotels, a *pension* on the hill-side, from the balconies of which they could look down upon the two quaint spires of the cathedral, then away across the end of the lake, busy with its landing-place, steamers, and station, to Mount Pilatus, contrasting in stern and gloomy desolation with the lively scene below.

The *pension* was not large enough to accommodate all its guests, and Evelyn and Dottie, to their great joy, were lodged in a sequestered house in a grove of walnut trees, about five minutes' walk away.

'A fit haunt for a poetess,' cried Dottie, in high glee, as after breakfast they retired to this lonely domain to unpack and rest. 'Mariana in the Moated Grange!'

'Only it isn't moated, and it isn't a grange,' rejoined Evelyn.

'Oh, you shouldn't be too literal! Isn't this a dear, delightful place? We shall be able to

enjoy it to the full these few days before we go up to Engelberg.'

Over the long tables in the cheerful *salle-à-manger*, the two girls cast a curious eye as they entered it for luncheon that day. Evelyn and Dottie were not yet *blasées* by manifold experience. It was only their second visit to Switzerland, and Evelyn specially, eager and receptive, was ready for new impressions on every side. Among the forty or fifty guests—British matrons, fresh young girls, spinsters of that peculiar antiquated type only to be discovered in foreign boarding-houses—she quickly singled out one lady as being original in appearance. This lady, small, spare, middle-aged, was remarkable for the perfect whiteness of her hair, brushed up in Marie Antoinette fashion above her brow; and the whiteness, in another and a yellower shade, of the skin of her face, which was creased into wrinkles in a curious way, and reminded one of soft parchment. With these two shades of white contrasted the brilliancy of her black eyes, which literally gleamed from beneath her delicate and finely marked eyebrows. There was something in her appearance as if she had been prematurely withered physically by too hot a sun or too rapid living, while her mind was evidently in its vigour of youth. The adjectives, weird and dainty, might both have been applied to her at once, incongruous though they seem.

Evelyn was inly meditating as to her nationality as she stood on the balcony that evening,

when she found the little lady at her side. A commonplace question as to Evelyn's acquaintance with Lucerne at once revealed the stranger's nationality. She was American, but she pronounced it Amurrican.

'You are going up to Engelberg? So am I too,' she observed. 'I am all alone, except for my maid. Are you fond of reading?'

This abrupt question was suggested by Matthew Arnold's Poems in Evelyn's hand.

'My countrymen read a great deal of poetry,' she continued, in her undulating tones. 'We have some fine poets of our own, but none to approach your greatest.'

Mrs. Lancaster, who was reposing her ample form in a chair near Evelyn, thought this a favourable opportunity to remark affably—

'My niece writes poetry herself. She has just published a book.'

'Ah, this is very interesting. You are a poetess!' cried the bright-eyed lady. 'And now you can tell me all about English literary society.'

Evelyn found it most embarrassing to have to confess, as she quickly had to do, that she did not enjoy the personal acquaintance of Browning, Tennyson, William Morris, Lewis Morris, nor Matthew Arnold; that she had, in fact, never seen one of them; that she had read very little of Browning, and could not understand anything she *had* read, excepting the 'Pied Piper,' 'Home Thoughts from Abroad,'

and a few shorter poems; that 'Paracelsus was a sealed book to her, and so forth.

'Then are you any relation of Browning's "Beautiful Evelyn Hope" who died?' inquired the lady archly.

'My father gave me the name Evelyn because he was fond of Browning, and of that poem in particular,' replied the girl, flushing.

Without seeming to be impertinent, this bright-eyed little woman proceeded to put her through an examination from which Evelyn came out, as she felt in a sort of rage, with anything but flying colours. Then had she read any American poets? Well, Longfellow was tolerably familiar, but she knew little more than the names of Bryant, Whittier, and Lowell.

'You have a great deal of pleasure to come,' remarked the lady, with a tinge of surprise in her voice. 'And as you have read so little, you will have the greater opportunity of being original. You will lend me this book of yours?'

Evelyn rather wished she need not comply, and for the second time felt a desire to conceal *Day-dreams* from the public gaze. But she was obliged to produce one of the little store of volumes she had brought, and then excused herself from further conversation by the fact of her long journey and desire for rest. Mrs. Lancaster was already nodding in her chair, unmoved by the fair vision before her of gleaming Lucerne and dusky Pilatus.

The next few days passed, as days at Lucerne

generally do pass, in excursions on the lovely lake, and to the top of the Righi. Evelyn saw a great deal of her American friend, Miss Aurelia Q. Wentworth, and was by no means sure whether she liked or detested her. Miss Wentworth's familiarity with almost every standard English work was discouraging to Evelyn, who, though she imagined she had read extensively, had in reality made her Tennyson and Mrs. Browning go a very long way. To find an American perfectly at home in English literature, and with all sorts of unknown quotations on the tip of her tongue, was distinctly galling to pride; and Miss Wentworth did not allude to *Day-dreams* at all—an evident proof of lack of appreciation, and a stab to the authoress's self-esteem. Still, the bright little woman's intelligence and the charm of her conversation, enhanced by the curious accent, were so great that Evelyn could not shun her society. Dottie frankly declared she thought her 'delightful fun,' and carried on sparring matches with her, relative to national institutions, in which the English champion had decidedly the worst of it.

'Miss Wentworth says she's coming with us to Engelberg,' said Dottie, as the two girls made their way to the Moated Grange. 'She says she and her maid will join us, and the carriage holds six—two outside, four in. She says we're just the nicest English people she ever met.'

'Frank, at all events,' cried Evelyn, laughing.

‘But I think she might have waited till we asked her.’

Miss Wentworth, however, was not inconvenienced by over-much shyness, and showed a happy confidence that her arrangement was the best for all parties.

So the four ladies, with their two maids, drove away one cloudy August morning from the lovely *pension* on the hill—down the steep road into Lucerne, round the head of the lake, and along the pleasant country on its western bank, with Mount Pilatus frowning above them, until they reached the bridge across the narrow channel that separates the Alpnacher See from the rest of the lake. Lucerne is of strange and irregular shape, as all those happy people know who have been privileged to glide over its surface, and is rather like an aggregation of lakes than one alone.

The carriage rattled across the frail wooden structure to Stansstadt, with its square-pinnacled tower, then through orchards and pastures to Stans.

‘Oh, look at that monument! What can it be?’ cried Dottie, as they passed the square adjacent to the handsome parish church, and caught sight of a marble group in a niche on the further side.

‘Well, that is a monument to Arnold von Winkelried,’ responded Miss Wentworth. ‘Miss Hope will tell us all about him, for I see there is a sonnet to Liberty in her *Day-dreams*, and she apostrophises Swiss patriots among others.’

But Evelyn could not remember anything about Arnold von Winkelried. She had a vague idea he was a hero; but as to when exactly he lived, or what he did, she had no accurate knowledge. Her transient vexation at this renewed failure to distinguish herself in the American lady's eyes was, however, soon forgotten, for she quickly began to see that they were really entering the mountain land. They were driving along a narrow valley, watered by an impetuous river. On either hand lawn-like slopes of exquisite greenness and smoothness ran steeply up into forest, overtopped by gigantic crags, the summits of which were sometimes veiled in cloud.

'The sun only shines here for one hour in the morning during the winter,' announced Evelyn, glad to show that she did know something definite about their new surroundings.

At Wolfenschiessen, a spot of exquisite loveliness, the party lunched at a quaint and simple hostelry. Then they drove on again. The scenery grew in beauty, and soon Evelyn, who loved waterfalls, was loud in rapturous exclamations at the sight of wild leaps of water coming down from wooded heights. What a glorious region she was entering! Surely, the girl reflected, she should gather material for new efforts in this world of fairy loveliness! She would write another book of poems, and call it *Echoes from Engelberg*. Her whole nature thrilled with happiness. Dottie, too, was in the highest spirits, and Mrs. Lancaster's round

face glowed with pleasure, a little mingled with apprehension at the coming climb. For had she not read that the way past Grafenort was excessively steep? And was she not accustomed only to smooth and easy bowling along the roads to and from London?

Beyond Grafenort the scenery became magnificent. The road turned a corner, so to speak. And what a corner! A corner of mountain clad in forest; and across the river a lofty wall of precipice piled on precipice. Through a beautiful forest the road now began steadily to ascend in long windings. Soon the roar of the torrent grew louder, and the road came out upon the edge of a steep descent to the raging waters below.

‘Evelyn! Evelyn, my dear! I must insist on it that you sit by the driver, and tell him to be very careful!’ cried Mrs. Lancaster, whose customary calmness was disturbed at once by any imaginary danger in driving.

Evelyn’s superior knowledge of German gained her this distinction, which she obediently accepted, displacing a maid. The driver was loquacious, but his remarks were not encouraging. This was nothing to what was coming; oh dear no; wait and see the Pferd-Himmel—the heaven of horses!

‘What does he say, Evelyn? I must insist on knowing!’ cried her aunt, as the carriage stopped.

‘He says we must some of us get down and walk, and that we shall soon come to a good

place for afternoon tea,' replied Evelyn, translating the latter part only of their coachman's remarks; and suiting the action to the word, the girl stepped on through the forest in unspeakable delight. She did not want Dottie's lively chatter by her side, nor Miss Wentworth's inquisitions—she wanted to be alone in the temple of Nature, into whose mystic shrine she was penetrating with joy ineffable.

'Where are you going, Evelyn?' faintly called Dottie, panting far behind.

'I am taking the "short cut for walkers,"' responded Evelyn proudly, as she ascended the path that leads steeply from turn to turn of the more gradual carriage road.

But let walkers to Engelberg beware, especially if they are deep in poetic reverie; for after being landed safely on fresh turns of the road two or three times, Evelyn took a path which was not a genuine short cut at all. She climbed on and on, surprised that she did not see the familiar level of the high road loom before her; and at last, as her path narrowed off, she became aware that she was encompassed by forest alone; in fact, that she was certainly lost.

This situation, however acceptable from its poetic side, was not without its practical drawbacks. Evelyn was fortunately too sensible to run hither and thither, and get more and more bewildered; neither was she enticed by the lovely profusion of yellow foxgloves and tall gentian around her, the trailing ivy and the luxuriant moss on the rocks. She

quickly decided that she had better go back by the path she had taken; and, descending it with no little trepidation, she was at length rewarded by seeing the high road again. The great thing now was to overtake her party. She toiled along, fearful lest she should never reach them; but at last she came upon a wood-side hostelry, with tables on the opposite side of the road, at which Mrs. Lancaster, Miss Wentworth and Dottie were sitting. The expression of dismay upon their faces quickly gave way to delight when they saw Evelyn.

‘Oh, we thought you were lost, Evelyn! Now we can have our tea in peace. Where have you been?’ cried Dottie, making room for her cousin.

‘Oh, my dear girl, I have been so terrified!’ ejaculated her aunt.

‘A short cut is not always so very short,’ remarked Miss Wentworth. Evelyn was too tired to do anything but accept the situation. She wished somehow that she were not always showing, in some little way, to a disadvantage before Miss Wentworth, who continued to utter gentle gibes at the poetess and the unpoetic beaten track. But after all it was but a trifle.

And soon they were driving along ‘Pferd-Himmel;’ so called, perhaps, because of the ease with which both horses and freight could quit the present life. Yet with the practised Swiss drivers there is no danger. Down, down shot the precipice to the raging torrent incalculably far below, and the man poured into Evelyn’s

ear the gratifying intelligence that he had driven along the brink once at midnight. The great thing to prepare for Pferd-Himmel was, he said with emphasis, to drink enough—not too much, but enough—that was really necessary! Evelyn was an abstainer, and tried to improve the occasion, but in vain. And poor Mrs. Lancaster's terrors were not of long duration; for the road now turned abruptly to the left, and a fair green Alpine valley spread out before the travellers. Above, the snowfields of the Titlis stretched in dazzling whiteness high into heaven, and farther on, rocky pinnacles stood up from regions of snow and ice, seeming to shut in the narrow vale. It was a scene of peaceful loveliness, and the monastery bell was ringing out the Ave Maria. For it was toward evening, and they had reached Engelberg.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE JOCH PASS.

. . . Every side my glance was bent
O'er the grandeur and the beauty lavished through the
whole ascent.
Ledge by ledge out broke new marvels; now minute and
now immense,
Earth's most exquisite disclosure, heaven's own God in
evidence.

Robert Browning.

‘OH, Dottie! I never saw anything so lovely
in my life!’ cried Evelyn, as she drew
her curtain on the morning after their
arrival. The cousins occupied rooms
with a door of communication between the two.
The view from the windows embraced, first, the
green floor of the valley, diversified by woods
and river, then, away to the right, the pine
forests steeply climbing towards the dazzling
snows of the Titlis. The pure, softly curving
whiteness of these vast fields invests the moun-
tain with a peculiar charm. It is not of stu-
pendous height, nor of any specially grand
proportions, but it displays so much snow that
it is always a vision of serene and heavenly
beauty. Beyond the Titlis the stern rocky
peaks of the Great and Little Spannort con-
trast with the rounded snowfields of the greater
mountain. Opposite there rises the Engelberg,
a strangely-shaped, abrupt hill; and the lower
heights are clothed by forests, through which

the white leap of a torrent gleams ever against the dark tree-tops. In the foreground lies the village of Engelberg, with its great building that Evelyn recognised, from photographs she had seen, as the monastery beside the church. It was a picture of exquisite beauty, and the bell sounding forth through the morning air seemed to lend a mystic charm to the scene.

‘This will soon bring forth a second volume of *Day-dreams*, won’t it, Evelyn?’ cried Dottie. ‘Oh, the perfect loveliness of everything! How glad I am we are going to stay here instead of tearing about all over Switzerland! I only hope Algy will like it.’

‘He can’t help it,’ replied Evelyn. ‘You said he was coming in a week, didn’t you?’

‘Yes, in a week or ten days, from Leipsic, with some acquaintances he has picked up there—a Herr Lichtenstein and his wife, whom he seems to like very much.’

When the two girls descended to breakfast in the vast *salle-à-manger*, with its long tables and polyglot assemblage of German and English, Mrs. Lancaster and Miss Wentworth were already there to greet them. All were full of exclamations of pleasure at the lovely morning view, and of satisfaction that such a charming spot had been fixed upon as a resting-place.

‘Your poet Wordsworth, you remember, has a sonnet on Engelberg,’ remarked Miss Wentworth to Evelyn.

‘Has he? I don’t think so,’ replied Evelyn confidently. ‘I don’t think he ever came here.’

Miss Wentworth's bright black eyes twinkled a little, but she said no more. After breakfast, when the hotel guests were streaming forth upon the terrace, and sitting in the covered verandah to enjoy the prospect of the day's pleasures in a brief space of *dolce far niente*, Evelyn felt a volume slipped into her hand, open. Yes! it was Wordsworth's Poems, and the sonnet was really and truly there in black and white.

‘ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS.

‘For gentlest uses, oftentimes Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing hands ;
And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic wands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill,
The sacred ENGELBERG, celestial bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues
at will.

Clouds do not name those Visitants : they were
The very Angels whose authentic lays
Sung from that heavenly ground in middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should raise
A holy structure to the Almighty's praise.
Resplendent apparition ! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze ;
And watch the slow departing of the train
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.’

When sunset came, Evelyn could appreciate the exquisite beauty and appropriateness of the poet's fancy. All day long mists had been forming, hovering and fleeting round the Hill of Angels ; but at eventide it glowed with a celestial radiance below the wreathing clouds ;

and, gathering slow, they floated upwards in majestic procession away and away, folding their wings and leaving the mountain to its rest. Dreamlike and transcendent was the beauty of Engelberg at seasons such as these.

‘It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky,’ says Ruskin; and it is a fact of ordinary experience that to invite men and women to look at the pageant constantly spread out above and before them—of sunset, of shifting cloud and sunlight, not to speak of the splendour of the dawn, which few ever see at all—is a sure way to irritate them! But at Engelberg people cannot be blind, choose how they will, to the beauty and wonder of the sky, the clouds, the light. Ever shifting, ever forming combinations of perfect and marvellous loveliness, the atmospheric effects would make the despair of an artist, while they thrill the most commonplace observer with rapture.

Evelyn felt that she had come to the fit home of a poet. Her table was all set forth in her room with paper, pens, ink and blotting-paper, ready to record inspiration at any hour of the day or night; yet somehow she could not write; and attempts to record her ecstasy at the cloud-angels soaring away from the hill at eventide proved so abortive a failure that she tore up the paper in disgust.

‘I must wait a little while, until I am more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the place,’ she thought.

Of course the great monastery church was one

of the first places visited by the four ladies. In the vestibule a notice, '*Avis aux Etrangers. Respectez la croyance des fidèles,*' with particulars as to sundry items of misbehaviour to be avoided, gave a rather unpleasant impression as to the manner of conduct sometimes adopted by those who differed in belief from the worshippers. The spacious interior, with its faint smell of incense, and its brilliant paintings on the roof and in the chapels, its altar-piece gleaming behind the closed screen, struck Evelyn as being a wonderful spectacle to behold in so remote an Alpine valley.

One painting in particular, a 'Descent from the Cross,' by Deschwanden, thrilled and impressed her. The face of Mary, with its agony of tenderness, gazing upon the lacerated form of her Son, made tears spring into the girl's eyes. She looked and looked again, and could not turn her eyes away from the group representing the mystery of that sublime Passion that has power to stir the heart to-day, even more than it stirred the spectators long centuries ago.

Strange was it to think that here, in this lonely village, the immortal story went on mutely appealing to the consciences of men—disfigured indeed by superstition, and in far differing form and guise from that which Evelyn had learnt to love and reverence—but still, touching the same Christ in whom she trusted, dying for men, rising to bring life and immortality to light.

The first few days were spent by the party in learning to know the clean, bright village,

the church, and the immediate surroundings ; and to know Engelberg is to love. Then Evelyn felt the need of some further departure.

‘Do you see that little house far away on the height, auntie?’ she inquired, one evening after dinner, as, according to their wont, the guests thronged on the verandah.

‘No, my dear, I can’t say that I do. Why, there’s only snow up away there.’

‘No, no, I mean on the ridge, beneath the snows of the Titlis ; on the wall of precipice above the forest.’

With this explanation Mrs. Lancaster at length declared she saw it.

‘Though it looks more like a square box than a house ; and for all the world as if it would tumble over the very next wind that blows.’

‘Well, that is the new hotel they are building on the Trübsee Alp. I want to go up there, and on farther, up the Joch Pass and on to the Engstlen-Alp, just to spend one night. Oh, do let us go, auntie !’

‘My dear, I could not think of such a thing. Why, it looks as if you would have to crawl up the face of that hill there like flies on a wall.’

But Miss Wentworth came to the rescue.

‘If you will let the girls go, I reckon I can take care of them, and I will enjoy going too,’ she observed. ‘It’s quite safe, and the weather is settled.’

Mrs. Lancaster, who was the soul of good-nature, was not long in consenting to the plan, and about eight o’clock the next morning the

three departed—Miss Wentworth on a horse, the two girls on foot. They crossed the floor of the valley, entered a beautiful pine forest, and ascended slowly, in long zigzags, until they came out on a wild track of moorland, the Gerschni-Alp.

The path led across this, and then began to ascend the precipice that had looked so alarming from the hotel, the 'precipitous Pfaffenwand,' as Baedeker calls it. It was very hot, and Dottie and Evelyn often paused to rest at a turn of the path. The unfinished hotel standing on the brink looked very far above them; but it gradually grew nearer, and at last they reached the summit.

A cry of delight burst from the girls, for a lovely mountain basin lay before them, flanked by the snows of the Titlis, that stretched up and up in immense fields of dazzling whiteness. It seemed as though a vast lake had anciently lain here. The actual inn of the Trübsee was on the further brink of this hollow, with a little tarn lying beside it, and far above the inn rose the craggy moorland heights, over which wound the path of the Joch Pass. The travellers found, as always is the case at these altitudes,

'Hills piled on hills, and Alps on Alps arise.'

The way they had to climb looked still more distant and remote than it had appeared from the other side of the valley, when they had espied it from the gardens of their hotel.

'This reminds me of those lines I read to



you. Do you remember them?' asked Evelyn, and quoted—

'The aims whence ever anew shall arise the soul;
The goal that is not—and ever again the goal.'

Dottie, it is scarcely needful to say, did *not* remember the lines, but Miss Wentworth, who caught the remark from her elevation, was interested at once, and would have gone off into a literary discussion, had not the jolting and uncertain pace of her steed rendered it impossible.

Outside the little hostelry of the Trübsee they saw, as they approached, a mule standing, with a lady sitting on its back, the driver resting by its side. She was evidently declining the voluble solicitations of the little landlady to descend and enter, and a cup of milk was finally brought out to her.

Evelyn suddenly uttered a stifled exclamation as she saw the lady's face under the broad hat.

'What is the matter, Evelyn?' cried Dottie.

'Oh, Dottie! Don't you see who it is? Mrs. Allingham West. I should know her in a moment, although she looks so different.'

'And who is she?' inquired Dottie innocently.

'Why, Dot! you are really too provoking. Don't you remember the conversazione of the Royal Society?—the authoress? Oh, you must remember! And here she is!'

Evelyn rushed forward to impart her information to Miss Wentworth, and was somewhat embarrassed by the way in which that lady received it.

'Oh yes. The gifted author of *Transmi-*

grations! A very fortunate and gratifying thing to meet her. I'll just get off my horse, and introduce myself to her.'

'Please don't! I'm sure she wouldn't like it,' begged Evelyn, in an agony, as she saw Miss Wentworth preparing to suit the action to the word.

'And why not? I should think she would appreciate an interview!' replied the American.

To Evelyn's unspeakable relief the lady herself took the initiative, for, lowering her parasol and bending a little forward, she addressed the two girls in a clear, decided voice. How well Evelyn remembered and loved its tone!

'Can you tell me if the way down to Engelberg is too steep to ride in comfort?'

'I should not like to ride down the Pfaffenwand,' replied the girl, in a tremulous tone, while the colour rushed to her cheeks. 'The rest of the way is easy.'

'Oh, thanks! My man is so stupid, and only talks *patois*; it is useless to ask him. And now, as you come from Engelberg, perhaps you can tell me—is the place very full?'

'It is crowded,' replied Evelyn, with truth.

'And the best hotel?'

'They are all good; but we like the one where we are staying—the Felsberg.'

'And that is full, I suppose? Yes? Dear me! we ought to have written for rooms from Meiringen.' A line was on the lady's brow.

A thought flashed into Evelyn's mind. She interchanged a word with Dottie, then spoke.

‘It will give me so much pleasure, in case of any difficulty, if you will take my room at the Felsberg Hotel. When we return, I can share my cousin’s. Please do. I know you by sight. I should think it the very greatest honour to be of any use to you.’

‘You are really very kind,’ replied the lady, with a faint intonation of surprise; ‘but I could not possibly cause you such inconvenience.’

Evelyn urged her point with much earnestness, and explained that she would not be home for the night, and that her room and Dottie’s were so far at the full disposal of Mrs. West, who was, it appeared, travelling with her maid, and hoping to meet a party of friends after a few days at Engelberg. At length she condescended to accept the proffered help, in case of need, and Evelyn proceeded to write, with a hand trembling with excitement, a few lines to the landlord on a leaf torn out of the authoress’s pocket-book.

Miss Wentworth, who had several times attempted to edge into the conversation, now broke in—

‘It gives me great pleasure, as an Amurrican, to meet the gifted Mrs. West. I can assure you that in my country your name is a household word; and——’

‘Oh, you are too good,’ said the lady, cutting short Miss Wentworth’s eloquence unceremoniously. ‘We shall meet again at the Felsberg. Good morning.’ And she moved away, followed by maid and driver, while Evelyn stood rooted to the spot in a trance of delight at this wonderful and enchanting encounter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENGSTLEN-ALP.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies ;
Clear shines the glorious sun above ;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

Wordsworth.

IMPETING is the path that winds upwards over the craggy moorland shoulder towards the Joch Pass; fair and wild are the views revealed to the climber, of snowfield, peak, and ravine. But lovely as it was, Evelyn's feet trod it unwillingly after her encounter with Mrs. Allingham West. She would fain have turned back and followed her idol down to the valley. To be under the same roof with her! to have the opportunity, through this brief interview and offer of service, of acquaintance, possibly friendship! The perspective was bewilderingly delightful; and to turn her back on it, even for twenty-four hours, was a trial.

Once Evelyn actually proposed that they should go back. The ascent was steep and hot. Miss Wentworth's horse could not climb, and was proving neither ornamental nor useful, as he had to be hauled up by the bridle, with wild shouts and cries from the driver. These circumstances were relied upon by the girl as

aids to her suggestion, but it was indignantly negatived.

‘We shall no doubt see the gifted authoress as much as we wish when we get back,’ asserted Miss Wentworth, stopping to rest. ‘She did not impress me as favourably as I could have hoped; she did not offer to shake hands. In my country, even the President will shake hands with the poorest citizen.’

‘It is not the English custom,’ rejoined Evelyn tartly.

‘Well, that is an answer to every objection one could urge against anything, is it not?’ responded the American, in such a tone Evelyn could hardly tell if she were jesting or in earnest.

But Dottie broke out,—

‘Really, Evelyn, I am sure it is enough to give up my bedroom, without giving up my excursion as well, all to please somebody I only saw once, and don’t care if I never see again.’

The usually perfect temper of Dorothy Lancaster seemed ruffled.

‘Why, Dot, you are not giving up your bedroom at all; it is mine she is to have——’

‘It comes to the same thing, as I share mine with you,’ replied Dottie.

‘You always said you would like it,’ remarked Evelyn, in an aggrieved tone.

She had grown to consider that, as an authoress, she had a claim to privacy, and she valued it greatly; while little Dottie always declared she could never have too much of Evelyn’s society. Hence, in proposing the new

arrangement to Mrs. West, she had left Dottie's feelings rather out of the question, and her cousin, who was not disposed to worship at the authoress's shrine, resented it.

No cloud of vexation, however, could long remain on Dorothy's brow, and harmony was quickly restored. On the summit of the Joch Pass they had a long rest before pursuing their downward way.

The horse was found no better adapted to the steep descent than he had been to the steep ascent. Evelyn congratulated herself that she had no need of such aid, as she stepped gaily along the path, which winds down the moorland, with the vast snows of the Wendenstöcke on the left. Far, far away appeared the Bernese Alps, in faint yet imposing splendour. There seemed a world of Alpine air between. Evelyn recognised the well-known forms of majesty, and eagerly pointed them out to Miss Wentworth.

Soon a lovely blue lake became visible below, and then a little inn was seen on a stretch of pasture not far from the water's brink. This was the Engstlen-Alp, which lies about a thousand feet below the summit of the pass, but is nevertheless at the lofty elevation of 6,000 feet, about the same height as the Grimsel Hospice. Surrounded by mountain tops, a white torrent streaming down a rock-face near, and the further vista breaking away into pine forests extending far, far down towards the valley—with the Schreckhörner and Wetterhörner hovering in dim Titanic majesty to close

the prospect—it was a ‘picture for remembrance.’

‘Well, this is better than hunting after Mrs. Allingham West!’ cried Dottie, dancing forward, with health and happiness sparkling in her eye. Miss Wentworth appeared dreadfully tired; she had been able during the last half-hour to remount her steed, but was very weary, nevertheless, and glad to enter the little wooden inn. The landlady gave the ladies a hospitable reception, and assigned them two rooms in the *dépendance*, which is some yards away, and larger than the original building. Tea followed, in a primitive *salle-à-manger*, and Evelyn then went forth alone to muse on a seat at the top of a little hill, whence she could enjoy the view in all its glory.

‘She doesn’t want me; she is composing poetry,’ said Dottie to Miss Wentworth, in tones of awe, as they sat at a little table outside the inn.

‘I hope not,’ was the somewhat unexpected reply of the American lady.

‘Why? Oh, Miss Wentworth, don’t you like Evelyn’s poems?’

‘I don’t think poetry is her *forte*,’ replied the American. ‘Very pretty, and so forth, but not original; she does not write *herself*, but only what she has heard other people say, or what she thinks she ought to feel. She has never grasped that precept of my countryman Emerson, “Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string.”’

This was heresy, and Dottie had that very

rare feminine virtue, dislike to unfavourable criticism of an absent friend.

‘Oh, I am sorry you don’t appreciate her!’ she cried, with genuine distress. ‘I noticed you never said anything about *Day-dreams*, and I was afraid you didn’t like them. Everybody does at home, and Evelyn is quite a heroine, you know, among all our friends; they think it so splendid to have written a book.’

‘My dear little girl,’ said the lady, laying her curiously white soft wrinkled hand upon Dottie’s arm, ‘I did not mean to find fault with your cousin’s work behind her back. I shall tell her my opinion some day, when she knows me better. I think she is very clever and very charming; that is all the more reason why she should direct her powers in the right way, instead of getting spoiled and idle.’

‘Idle!’ ejaculated Dottie.

‘Well, well; you are a brave little champion, and we will not discuss Evelyn any more; there is much temptation in her way,’ rejoined Miss Wentworth musingly.

This was very bewildering to Dot, who did not know anything about Emerson or iron strings, and who firmly believed that Evelyn was a genius of the first order, even if she were a little tiresome sometimes in running after authoresses.

Meanwhile the object of their conversation was absorbed in a happy dream. She was not, in spite of Dottie, trying to compose poetry; she found her lines and similes all too incongruous and halting to approach the glory spread

out before her. And this was, as Miss Wentworth would have recognised, a step in the right direction—a step towards better work.

They were soon interested in watching the herdsman calling home the goats for the night. Standing on the pasture, he uttered a peculiar, long-drawn cry, and immediately the hill-sides around became alive with leaping, running creatures, speeding from crag to crag, hastening down the slopes to their nightly rest.

Supper, with various guests in the little inn, followed; a pleasant meal, enlivened by chat and laughter. Many of the people were making a long stay in this fair, lofty pasture land, and spoke with enthusiasm of its invigorating air and the magnificent walks they could take over the surrounding heights.

Evelyn and Dottie wandered after nightfall near the sleeping waters of the lake, watching the summer lightning play upon the snow; then came rest and happy dreams, broken by a feeling of the strangeness of the place.

‘Oh, how I wish we were going to stay here!’ were Dottie’s waking words; and were it not for the vision of Mrs. Allingham West, Evelyn would have echoed them. As soon as the cousins were dressed, they went across to the inn in the brilliant morning sunlight. Through the open kitchen door a pretty scene met their gaze. One of the inn servants, a buxom, handsome girl, whom Evelyn had admired on the previous evening, was sitting, with her back turned to the *pot au feu*, reading a letter, a

smile of delight and coquetry mingled on her face. A lad was busily eating his breakfast, inattentive to aught else. He evidently had been bearer of the missive, as well as of a large round cheese that still adorned his porter's tray, unstrapped now from his shoulders.

'What a pretty picture!' whispered Evelyn. And she found her imagination evolving an explanation of the scene.

The boy had brought an epistle from the Alpine maiden's absent lover; the cheese was an offering of affection, made by that lover's own hands. She felt an intense interest in watching the face of the pretty Marie as she spelt out the letter. Whether the latter part of the conjecture was true, history saith not; but the former part was accurate enough, as Evelyn learned a little to her cost.

As Miss Wentworth's horse did not excel in climbing, she started half an hour in advance of the others. The girls had paid their bill, and were ready to depart, when Marie, with a very red face, rushed out, extending a letter to Dottie, and uttering many excuses—excuses that Evelyn could translate a little more accurately than the Swiss maiden thought.

The note, dated the previous day, had come up from Engelberg, which the boy had quitted before dawn. It was from Mrs. Lancaster, containing rather startling news.

'Directly you had gone,' ran the note, 'there came a letter from Algy, saying he should be in from Lucerne to-day, and sure enough he came

in after lunch, looking very well, with some German friends ; but he seemed dreadfully put out to find you gone, dear fellow, and nothing would suit him but he must come on to the Engstlen-Alp himself. I told him you meant to return, but he urges me to write and tell you to stay till he comes, so I must put off seeing you again till the day after to-morrow. We have had another surprise, for Mrs. Allingham West has come, and brought a note from Evelyn ; she has taken Evelyn's room, which I consider a little forward on her part.'

'Oh dear !' cried Evelyn ; 'it is too bad of Algy. I did so long to get back to Mrs. West ; and now we must stay here. And Miss Wentworth is quite out of reach. She will wonder what has become of us.'

'She will find it out when she gets to Engelberg, and at any rate we can't help it,' replied Dottie ; 'only I wish we had not had all the trouble of getting ready, and paying everything up. I should just like to know why we had not the note before Miss Wentworth started.'

The fact was that Marie's lover, employed at the dairy farm of Herrenrüti near Engelberg, was the messenger's brother, and had sent a letter of his own in addition to that of Mrs. Lancaster ; Marie had been so absorbed in the one that she had omitted to deliver the other.

It was after all not much of a hardship to linger in that lovely mountain pasture, among the grand old pines and cedars, and by the margin of the lake. And not many hours

elapsed before a young man, clad in grey, alpenstock in hand, and wearing an exceedingly joyous expression of countenance, was seen marching from the pass. Dottie flew into his arms.

‘Oh, Algy! I am so awfully glad to see you again.’

Evelyn followed sedately, and gave a kindly greeting to her cousin. He was four or five years older than his sister, slightly built, and below the average height; with fair hair and moustache, pleasant blue eyes, and a mouth and chin that to the critical observer would have betrayed a lack of firmness of character. But he was a prepossessing lad, and it said something in his favour that he had been partially, instead of completely, spoiled by the adoring fondness of his mother and sister, in whose eyes he could do no wrong. When he failed to take his degree at college, when he ran into debt, it was only ‘poor dear Algy’s misfortune,’ and when these false steps were retrieved, wholly or in part, he was a hero of heroes to these devoted women. Now he had been enjoying six months’ freedom on the Continent before ‘settling down.’

‘What a charming place! How extremely fit you all look! Cousin Evelyn, the mountains agree with you.’ And Evelyn, in her plain braided summer serge, white blouse, and shady hat, was certainly a very attractive feature of the Engstlen-Alp.

‘I vote we stay here, and don’t go back to Engelberg,’ continued the young fellow, estab-

lishing himself between the two. 'After all, that's down in a hole. What magnificent air! I say, I'm going up the Titlis; who'll come with me? I came up here on purpose, because I knew the Mater would be in a terrible fright if I did it from Engelberg. Cousin Evelyn, you speak German; let's come and collar a guide.'

'But if you have been six months at Leipsic and all sorts of places, don't you speak German too?' laughed Evelyn.

'Not I; it's too much of a grind to learn such a language as that.' And the three were soon engaged in interviewing a tall, muscular Swiss, with a broad smile, who towered above Algy like a giant, and, as Dottie suggested, could carry him in case of need.

Evelyn and Dottie declined to attempt the Titlis, Dottie objecting firmly to start at two a.m. They spent the rest of the day in rambling and sitting about, chatting so merrily that Evelyn almost forgot Mrs. Allingham West. She offered to draw out a list of phrases in German that might prove useful to her cousin — 'I do not wish to be left in this crevasse while you go back to Engelberg for assistance. 'How many thousand feet shall I fall if I slip down here?' and so forth; but Algy assured her that the Titlis was a perfectly safe mountain: 'a lady's mountain,' he added. It was, however, without envy that the girls heard him creep away at two a.m., and watched from their window the lantern disappearing into the shadows of the pass.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM DIZZY HEIGHTS.

But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire,
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him.

Tennyson.

RAIN and storm! In the morning, when Evelyn and Dottie rose from sleep, the Engstlen-Alp was in the clouds. No vision of the Bernese Alps was to be discerned; the thunder crashed among the mountains, and the girls could scarcely rush across to breakfast without getting drenched.

‘Poor, dear Algy!’ was Dottie’s wail; and a piteous object was seen about eight o’clock returning across the pasture. Dripping with wet, as though he had just emerged from a river, his ice-axe hanging useless in his hand, the guide towering behind him, he was a visible embodiment of the vanity of human hopes.

‘Titlis! no, indeed,’ he replied to Dottie’s eager questionings. ‘We got on the snow, and then, as we couldn’t see a yard before us, and the lightning and thunder kept it up between them, I thought it was time to come back. I’m going to bed; bring up my breakfast, Dot, there’s a good girl.’

It was only too evident to Evelyn's impatient longings that another day at the Engstlen-Alp was before her, and that intercourse with Mrs. Allingham West was still in abeyance. Algy had perforce to remain until his clothes were dried, although a young man who was staying at the inn lent him a complete suit, much too large for him. Released from the durandce vile of his bedroom, he pervaded the little *salle-à-manger* in this attire, chattering to any one who would listen, and giving an amusing description of his adventures of the night or early morning. He sketched a lively picture of himself crawling along steep snow-fields enveloped in gloom, and of the theatrical style in which his guide, when all further attempts were evidently hopeless, took off his hat and made a low bow to the mountain, saying, 'Adieu, Titlis!' No *contre-temps* could long affect Algy's easy good humour.

Evelyn spent the morning in listening and talking to him, but by the time the afternoon had come she was thoroughly tired of it, and felt inclined to enjoy a little quiet. Flitting through the rain to her room in the *dépendance*, and laden with pen, ink, and paper, she proceeded to carry out an impulse that had been strong within her since the morning, when she had seen Marie's radiant face. She had in imagination woven a little story of the Swiss betrothed pair; the one down at Herrenrüti, in the lovely vale of Engelberg, the other aloft on the breezy Alp; and she proceeded now to evolve it.

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height;
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills.'

The exquisite lines of Tennyson in the *Princess* served her as motto and inspiration. She made a liberal use of local colouring, for the beauty of the scene had impressed itself deeply upon her, and she felt a new delight in describing minutely and faithfully what lay around her, bathed in the sunshine of yesterday.

Evelyn had already acquired the art of writing her own language correctly and fluently. She also had a talent for describing what she had seen, in virtue of which she was esteemed by her friends as a capital letter-writer. If she had known it, she was doing better work in this fragment of a story than in the artificial poetry she had placed before the public: for one was true, the other was false. 'Trust thyself,' as the American seer has it, is a precept of unfailing wisdom for the writer. Sketch what you see, say what you feel, and be no second-hand reporter of current phrases.

At supper Algy was loud in complaints of having been robbed all the afternoon of his cousin's society, and when he drew from her the admission that she had been 'busy writing,' his usually serene temper seemed to receive a shock.

'Oh, Evelyn, can't you stop that while we're up here?' he ejaculated. 'Surely one book of poems is enough for one summer! I don't

want to have to murder more than one reviewer.'

'Reviewer! What do you mean?'

'Well, of course, I shall feel it my bounden duty to seek out and destroy the fellow who wrote those paragraphs in the *Critic*,' replied Algy playfully. But by the sudden flush that coloured Evelyn's cheek he saw he had made a mistake.

'Has there been any review of my book?' she demanded.

'Oh, didn't you know? Why, of course, it is attracting immense attention,' replied Algy, with bravado.

'Don't tease me! Tell me directly, there is a good boy. Now, Algernon, I insist upon knowing,' and Evelyn turned upon her cousin with determination.

Thus adjured, the unlucky Algy was obliged to acknowledge that there had been a short criticism in one of the leading weekly reviews. He had taken for granted that Evelyn had seen it, forgetting that the paper would only reach the reading-room of the Felsberg hotel on the morning she quitted the valley.

'What does the review say?' But on this point Algy was adamant, and he declined to reveal what he had read, only darkly repeating his threat of murdering the reviewer.

There was not much rest for poor Evelyn now until she found herself again at Engelberg. From Algy's nonsense it was evident enough that the review was unfavourable, and though

the authoress's vanity immediately began to suggest the motives which would prompt an uncomplimentary notice, and to dwell on all the flattering things which had been said *per contra*, she could not help feeling extremely uneasy. Kind little Dottie said all she could to comfort her, and scolded Algy well in private for letting out anything about it.

'Come now, I like that!' cried the discomfited youth. 'If Evelyn publishes, she must expect the things to be read, and criticised too. If she doesn't like it, she needn't publish, and I wish to goodness she wouldn't. I don't like the whole business—it's bad form for a girl like Evelyn to come out before the public. You and mother oughtn't to have allowed it.'

'Allowed it! Why, Algy, Evelyn will do just as she likes; you know that well enough; besides, she is of age. And *I* think the poems are lovely.'

'I can't make any sense out of them,' replied her brother.

'That shows they are good; some of the best poetry now can't be understood at all,' replied Dottie, with a wise air.

'Like the rhymes in *Through the Looking-glass*,' retorted her brother.

"'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe,
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe."

Only there *is* a kind of key to that, and, so far

as I can see, there is no key at all to some of the *Day-dreams*.'

'It is too bad of you to compare Evelyn's poems to that rubbish,' cried Dottie. 'But I will stand up for her. Every one now—Miss Wentworth too—is trying to run her down, and at home they all think so much of her. Poor Evelyn!'

'Nobody can admire Evelyn more than I do. I think she's one of the finest girls out,' replied Algy warmly; 'that's partly why I don't like all this nonsense. Why can't she be content to let it alone?'

'Tell me, was the review really very severe?' asked Dottie, with bated breath.

Algy's answer was expressive. He brought his clenched fist down on his knee, with three words—

'A regular crusher!'

The next day was cloudy and uncertain, but the three young people were off in the course of the morning, leaving the beautiful Engstlen-Alp with the hope of revisiting it some time for a lengthened stay. Their climb up the Joch was very uneventful, their descent to the Trübsee equally so; but when they came to the brink of the Pfaffenwand, a strange phenomenon met them. They looked over into a sea of mist. Nothing was to be seen save the steep path descending a little way and then vanishing. It seemed really rather venturesome to step over the edge. As they were lingering, lo! the mist parted, and behold! far, far below,

fields of living green were cleft by a hurrying river, and pine forests climbed into cloudland, while the convent bell sounded forth its mystic clangour. Anon all was veiled below, and the upper reaches of the hills became visible. From the Horbisthal, a glen running up a little way from the main valley, arose a perfect tumult of vapours, seething and ascending from the rocky basin like steam from a witch's cauldron ; then they wreathed themselves round the Engelberg. It was fitting now that the metaphor should change, for a sudden gleam of sunlight struck aslant upon all this wild confusion of mist, and illumined the lower slopes of the hills ; then away from the Mount of Angels sailed

‘the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.’

Algy gazed on the scene with real pleasure, although his exclamation of ‘Awfully jolly!’ seemed scarcely adequate to the occasion. Evelyn drank it all in with delight as she descended. What artist could give an idea of this, save Turner? she thought. What prose writer, save Ruskin, depict it in language? And it began to occur to the girl that perhaps the attempt to transfer to paper wonders such as these might be a task worth her ambition.

Dottie had good-naturedly intended to seize upon the *Critic*, in defiance of the notice requesting visitors not to carry away periodicals out of the public rooms. But Evelyn was beforehand with her, and darted in quest of it

the moment she entered the hotel. The room was untenanted, and she could scan the review with none to witness her discomfiture.

Yes, there it was; not, be it understood, engrossing a whole article to itself, but embodied in a couple of paragraphs in one of the general reviews that sum up the merits of current lighter literature on the last pages of the *Critic*.

'*Day-dreams*, a small and daintily-bound volume, published by Messrs. Dalrymple and Co., affords yet another illustration of the vanity of young authors fed by the mistaken flattery of friends. The poems are evidently the juvenile attempts of some aspirant after literary fame who has not yet mastered the elements of her craft.'

'*Her*, indeed! How did the wretch know I was a woman?' thought Evelyn. Her blazing eyes seemed as though they would scorch the paper; but a horrible fascination made her read on.

'Nothing better can be said for the majority of these verses than that they are a feeble attempt to imitate *In Memoriam*.

'The imitation does not extend beyond occasional identity of metre, and a lavish employment of adjectives, as the following specimen will show—

"When autumn winds blow chill and drear,
And dropping leaves are whirled away,
And crimson glows the parting day,
Full sadly wanes the waning year."

‘ One poem alone, “The Lark,” affords some indication that the author might in time do better work. We advise her, if her aspirations expressed in these three verses are sincere, to write no more poetry ; or, if she must write it, to let it go no further than her waste paper basket. She has so far mistaken her vocation, and the publication of her pretty volume is a step which, in riper years, she may blush to recollect.’

CHAPTER IX.

THE MUSICIAN AND HIS ART.

Music, which is earnest of a heaven,
Seeing we know emotions strange by it
Not else to be revealed.

Robert Browning.

WHERE is Evelyn?' anxiously inquired Mrs. Lancaster. The large brilliantly-lighted *salle-à-manger* of the Felsberg was filled with a motley crowd, from which arose a babel of tongues. The evening strife between Germans and English as to whether the windows should be shut or open had set in, and at the 'English table' our compatriots were triumphing over their adversaries.

The Lancaster party was a large one, for Mrs. Lancaster, Miss Wentworth, Dottie and Algy were reinforced by a stranger couple, with whom the young gentleman seemed on the best of terms. The head waiter on hearing the name Lichtenstein had wished to place them elsewhere, but they apparently liked fresh air, and were thoroughly at home among the English.

The gentleman, with spectaclled blue eyes, long hair, and a drooping, fair moustache, had something artistic about his appearance. His wife was evidently an Englishwoman. Her sweet face, with brown hair ruffling back from

a smooth white brow, blue eyes, and an intelligent mouth, had a particularly bright expression. She was soon absorbed in conversation with Algy, laughing like a merry schoolgirl at his account of his adventures.

‘But where is Evelyn?’ again asked Mrs. Lancaster piteously. ‘I haven’t seen her yet, to speak to, since she came back.’

‘Oh, she will be here soon. Evelyn doesn’t like to be hunted up, you know, mother,’ replied Dottie. But an anxious shade was on her brow that did not clear till Evelyn came in.

As she walked up the long dining-room the girl attracted the glance of many a pair of eyes in her direction. Her tall figure in its graceful white dress had a distinction about it, enhanced by the proud way in which she held her head. Her face was paler than usual, and her mouth was closely set.

‘She looks like a tragedy muse,’ murmured Algy to his sister; but admiration was very visible in the boy’s face.

‘Why, my dear, we missed you. Wherever have you been? Have you enjoyed yourself? Don’t you want your supper?’

A long catalogue of such questions fell from Mrs. Lancaster’s lips as her niece took the vacant chair opposite. The good lady did not wait for an answer to any of them except the last.

‘Don’t you feel well? I fear you’ve over-tired yourself; that’s what you’ve done—with that York Pass.’

'I am perfectly well, thank you, auntie, and I am not tired in the least. We have had a glorious time,' replied Evelyn, trying to smile.

'And did not you drop a tear when you thought of your poor American chaperon?' quaintly inquired Miss Wentworth. 'There was she, looking back and watching for the couple of truant girls that never came, all the long and weary way to Engelberg. A fine fright I was in before I reached home! But fortunately I met Mrs. Lancaster in the pine woods.'

'We were very sorry, but we were quite helpless,' replied Evelyn.

'Well, we've not made much progress with your gifted compatriot, Mrs. Allingham West,' pursued the American, in a lower tone.

Evelyn started. The dreadful review had driven Mrs. West out of her thoughts for the time. And now half the sweetness of the recollection was gone; for how could she claim even the lowest place in the same Temple of Art, when her one effort, her darling book, was said to be so much waste paper by the horrible *Critic*?

'Why hasn't she my room? I forgot all about it!'

'Well, she had it the first two nights, till they gave her another; and now she has a parlour as well; and she doesn't come down to meals,' explained Miss Wentworth. 'But I'm surprised to hear you'd forgotten, for you seemed so anxious to get back to see her.'

Evelyn felt just then as if she cared about nothing and nobody, except that unknown destroyer of her happiness, whom she would gladly have attacked face to face. All through the succession of courses at supper she kept on framing crushing speeches, of the direst satire, which she would delight to hurl at his head. She had quite made up her mind to write to the *Critic*.

‘Look here, Evelyn! I’m awfully sorry you’re so cut up,’ remarked Algy. The two were sitting in the verandah outside the hotel; the moon was silvering the lovely scene before them, and the voices and steps of visitors pacing up and down on the gravel only reached them as a confused murmur.

‘How do you know I am “cut up,” as you are pleased to express it?’ demanded Evelyn.

‘Any fool could see it. I’m awfully sorry, I am indeed, that I ever mentioned the thing; I’d have bitten my tongue out first; but I thought you knew—I thought it would be a joke.’

‘Your idea of a joke isn’t mine, Algy. But you needn’t vex yourself; I should have seen it, of course. I always read the *Critic*.’

‘I can find the fellow out when we get back to town, and knock him down, if that’ll be any comfort to you?’ suggested Algy.

Evelyn felt inly amused as she imagined the slight little form of her cousin engaged in single combat on her account.

‘No, thank you; that wouldn’t mend matters at all. I don’t want to talk about it.’

'But I wouldn't expose myself to that sort of thing, if I were you,' persisted the young man. 'You see, there are always a lot of rough fellows hanging about, ready to be down on anybody that writes poetry; and you are not fit to stand it.'

Evelyn heaved a sudden, passionate sigh, as she thought of her brilliant dreams of a literary career. Not fit to stand it! Was this to be the end of all?

Dottie's was the more welcome style of consolation, when she joined the pair a few minutes later.

'I wanted to hide the stupid old paper, but I couldn't. And, Evelyn dear, never mind. You remember there were crowds of people, Milton, and Keats, and Wordsworth, and ever so many more, attacked by reviewers, but the reviewers were all wrong, and the poets were all right. Don't be like Keats, who was killed by a review.'

This was very delectable, and Evelyn, though she knew Dottie was no judge at all on the subject, drank in her flattery with thirsty eagerness. Algy hemmed and hawed. He knew better, and didn't quite approve of this style of comfort. He hated that Evelyn should be public property, and wanted this incident to act as a warning to drive her away from the paths of literature. He was sorry that she should suffer, but hoped it would act as a wholesome deterrent.

The conversation was interrupted by the

sounds of music. Some one was playing the piano; not in the large *salon*, but in the music room, with its glass doors opening on the garden. And the tones that came forth upon the still night air were so exquisitely clear, delicate and pure, that it was evident a master was at the instrument.

‘That is Lichtenstein!’ cried Algy. ‘You ought to hear him play, Evelyn. He *can* play, and no mistake. He’s a professor at the Leipsic Conservatoire.’

The girls rose and stepped through the glass door into the room, where they found a crowd beginning to assemble. Herr Lichtenstein appeared to be improvising, and wandered on over the keys in ‘linked sweetness long drawn out.’ His head was thrown back, his hair drooped on his shoulders in true musician style, but no affectation characterised him; he was entirely absorbed in his beloved art. As the people streamed in from the hall of the hotel, curious to see and hear what new entertainment was in progress, he paused.

‘Do go on, Lichtenstein. My cousin and sister are longing to hear you,’ urged Algy.

‘I shall play with pleasure,’ responded the musician, ‘so long as people do not laugh and talk and walk about the room. If they are not still,’ and he shrugged his shoulders, ‘then, see you, the instrument cannot speak to them, and the labour is thrown away to make them understand.’

Herr Lichtenstein accompanied this speech

with such an expressive look round, that a hush fell upon the company. It was perfectly evident that the *maestro* intended to have silence, and the people arranged themselves expectantly in their seats. His wife, with her bright face, stood near the piano.

‘Play that “Mountain Reverie” of your own—do,’ urged Algy. And Herr Lichtenstein complied.

This was not, as Evelyn at first expected, an imitative composition, introducing cow-bells, the horn of the hunter, the jödel, and so forth. Herr Lichtenstein would have spurned anything of that sort with scorn ineffable. A blithe allegretto opening passage appeared to echo the joy of Nature :

‘And come, for Love is of the valley, come!’

it seemed to cry. Then followed a soft and mysterious movement, an air with a running accompaniment in the left hand. The execution was perfect, and the air was exquisitely sweet, with a plaintive strain in it that harmonised well with Evelyn’s mood. This was an echo of the joy that is half a pain; the solemn rapture of the wanderer as he stands alone in the presence of Nature, and feels the spell of the Mighty Mother on his soul. So at least the composer understood it, and though intelligence might be lacking to many hearers, the same mood was produced in those who were musically organised as the mood of the worshipper at Nature’s shrine.

There was a murmur of applause when Herr Lichtenstein had finished his *Reverie*, and rose from the piano. Evelyn was delighted with the performance; she had never heard such playing in her life before. This German artist seemed to woo forth all the charm that lay hidden in the pure, cold keys.

‘Why do you call that a Mountain *Reverie*, Herr Lichtenstein?’ inquired Miss Wentworth, who was always well to the front, and had edged herself through the crowd up to the professor. ‘I listened for the *Ranz des Vaches*, and the jödelling, and all that, but there was none of it. The music was very fine, but mightn’t it mean anything else just as well?’

This was a fine opportunity for the professor, and he began at once.

‘Madam, music is the language of emotion. I am not in my *Reverie*, which you are so good as to praise, trying to *describe*. That is, in my opinion, outside the province of music. I try to reproduce in that composition, by the help of sound, the moods that are appropriate to certain surroundings of Nature. That is almost the same thing, say you? Not so. The one deals with the inner life, the other with the outer world. A “soul atmosphere” is what I strive to create. I may fail—that understands itself—I do fail when there is not the ear to comprehend, the heart to feel; yet I strive all the same.’

‘And you succeed,’ murmured Evelyn, who had intensely enjoyed the *Reverie*. She

thought Herr Lichtenstein must be something like the Abbé Liszt, and longed to hear him play again; but the rattling of billiard balls that had begun in the adjoining room brought a determined refusal from him to have any more music; nor would he let his wife take his place at the instrument.

‘Music and billiards do not harmonise; it is sacrilege,’ he declared. Then he began to talk to his little group of friends about the organ in the abbey church.

‘Mendelssohn played upon it,’ he informed them. ‘He visited this vale, and loved it well. For his sake I love the place already, and I must see if the good monks will let me play upon the organ “hallowed by the master’s touch.”’

Evelyn had enjoyed the evening after all, in spite of the crushing blow that three hours since had made her feel as if the brightness of life were over. So delightful is it to come in contact with those who can charm by art, or teach by language—so refreshing is the intercourse with stranger minds.

When she withdrew for the night she opened *Day-dreams*, and sat with her candle, looking out. The lights in the village were almost all extinguished, the mountains brooded over the sleeping valley. She read a page here and there. Was it fancy? or was there in reality something lacking of the old charm? Here was a poem on ‘Sunrise’ that used to delight her. But the description of the mists fleeting

away seemed tame and inappropriate. Here was another on 'Music.' Did it convey anything of the emotion she had lately felt? With a shock of disappointment Evelyn recognised that her own delight in her work had undergone a sensible diminution; her resolve to write to the *Critic* died away.

'That wretched review has put me out of tune for enjoyment to-night,' she thought, as she closed the book. But there were other reasons; and Evelyn's new experiences were fast carrying on the work of education.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE SHRINE OF GENIUS.

You have read
My soul, if not my book, and argue well.
I would not condescend—we will not say
To such a kind of praise (a worthless end
Is praise of all kinds), but to such a use
Of holy art and golden life. I was young,
And peradventure weak—you tell me so—
Through being a woman; and for all the rest
Take thanks for justice.

Mrs. Browning.

MRS. ALLINGHAM WEST, whose name was darkly whispered about the hotel as lending a glory to the spot, 'kept herself *to* herself,' as Mrs. Lancaster expressed it in homely phrase. Her renown was such that she would have been the mark for every glance and every tongue among the hundred and fifty guests, had she gone in and out freely among them; so she remained for the most part a mysterious presence in her balconied rooms in the *dépendance*. Those who were fortunate enough to see her go or return from an excursion were not slow to proclaim the fact, and it invested them for the time being with a kind of borrowed lustre. However, she was not forgetful of Evelyn's courtesy, and on the day after her return from the Engstlen-Alp a little note was brought by a

waiter, requesting the pleasure of Miss Hope's company to tea that afternoon in Mrs. West's private sitting-room.

Evelyn's heart beat high with excitement at this communication, and she re-wrote her acceptance three times. Miss Wentworth was immediately very curious and interested. She was much disappointed that she also was not included in the invitation, and seemed at first inclined to accompany Evelyn unasked.

'I could say that, as an Amurrican interested in literature, I had just called in to express the homage of my countrymen to the gifted authoress. I need not stay to tea, of course, unless she asked me after that.'

'I'm sure it wouldn't do at all,' declared Evelyn, in mortal alarm.

'But when I return to my country it would be worth saying I had had an interview with any one so renowned,' pleaded the American.

'Go instead of me, Miss Wentworth, if you like,' said Evelyn sternly. But this, of course, was out of the question, and the elder lady was compelled to resign her half-formed project.

Evelyn was ready in her fresh white embroidered cambric gown long before the hour of four, and took many tremulous excursions between the clock in the hall of the hotel and her distant bedroom, fearful of being too early, yet fearful of being too late. Her own watch was not regarded as sufficiently trustworthy or *au fait* in Swiss time to direct her movements.

At last, with a beating heart, she tapped at the celebrated authoress's door.

Evelyn could never quite recollect her entrance; she had a confused vision of a pale, dark-haired lady of distinguished mien, in a tea-gown of lace and silk where some subtle shade of silver-grey melted into black, rising from a sofa to greet her, and murmuring a civil word or two. When she was seated with the teacup in her trembling hand she could take in the details of her surroundings. It was evident Mrs. West had made herself at home here, for signs of her presence were everywhere; from the latest English reviews lying on the table, to the wealth of fern and ivy that adorned wall and bracket. Photographs, that Evelyn could see at a glance were of distinguished men and women, stood about here and there; there were books in a bookcase on the wall, and many lying on table and cabinet. There was, in one sense, a litter in the room; but it was an artistic litter, giving it a pleasant and a homelike familiarity.

‘I wished to thank you for your kindness the other day,’ observed Mrs. West. ‘I had thoughtlessly omitted to write to Engelberg beforehand, and as the hotel was crowded, I found your offer of great service. My maid and I used your rooms in your absence for two nights. I hope it caused you no inconvenience.’

‘Oh no,’ cried Evelyn. ‘I was only too glad to be of any use to you. But I am sure

anybody in the hotel would have felt honoured to do the same.'

Mrs. Allingham West was thoroughly used to adulation and homage. She had leapt at one bound into the front rank of modern novelists, though for years she had been doing good and comparatively unnoticed work. But she happened to hit a theme that was much in the popular mind at the time. After a phase of contemptuous incredulity and lack of interest in all psychical phenomena, the intelligent thought of the age was beginning to turn with interest to various aspects of human consciousness, and various strange facts, that might suggest the retort to the sceptic :—

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
'Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

Mrs. West's book, a romance in which the natural and supernatural, so called, were weirdly mingled, achieved, therefore, a sudden and complete success.

'I am afraid you overrate the popularity of my work,' she said, smiling for the first time. 'I have no such claims on gratitude as you seem to suppose. But I am glad you like my book. I hope you enjoyed your stay at the Engstlen-Alp?'

This determined turning away of the conversation from literary topics was a great discomfiture to Evelyn. She did not want to talk about the Engstlen-Alp. The golden moments of her visit were fleeting past; for she instinctively felt that Mrs. West was not likely,

having once paid the debt of civility, to rush into any continued intimacy. How much time is lost, in this hurried life of ours, by a lack of knowledge as to one another's cherished subjects! It takes so long to find out that which our brother or sister really *is*, and meanwhile the opportunities for intercourse are going by, and the chances for interchange of sympathy, information, help, are slipping from our grasp for ever. But Evelyn could not force the conversation into any channel her hostess did not indicate, and so she replied that she did like the Engstlen-Alp very much; and in answer to further inquiries she duly notified that it was her first visit to Engelberg; that she thought it one of the loveliest places she had ever seen; that she had explored the church; had been to the Tätschbach-fall, but not yet to the Arnitobel, and so forth. While this civil interchange of questions and answers was going on—to poor Evelyn, like husks to one who asked for bread—a slight movement of Mrs. Allingham West on the sofa where she sat displayed the title of a paper lying beside her, that had been put down on the girl's entrance. Alas! it was the *Critic*.

In her state of nervous excitement Evelyn could not help a sudden flush and start, with such a look of dismay, that Mrs. Allingham West broke short off in her civil nothings, and gazed at her with astonishment.

'Are you not well? Perhaps the room is too warm for you?'

‘It is nothing of that sort, thank you,’ gasped Evelyn, trying to recover her self-control.

Mrs. West felt she had a very puzzling guest, and casting about for some fresh topic of conversation, she took up the *Critic*.

‘Do you often see this? I was glancing at it when you came in. There is a very severe, though rather an amusing, short review at the end, of some young author’s poems—Would you like a glass of water?’ For Evelyn had turned first scarlet, then very pale. Hurriedly there flashed through her brain the thought that she must fly; she put down her tea-cup, and half rose from her seat, then sat down again.

‘Have I distressed you? Perhaps you know the author?’ inquired Mrs. West, quite at a loss to account for this excessive display of agitation, and inwardly resolving not to invite unknown young ladies to tea any more. It was fortunate for Evelyn that, suddenly making up her mind concealment was hopeless, she murmured in a faint voice, ‘I am the author.’ Her face crimsoned again, and all at once she burst into tears.

There was something piteous in it, after all—the heroine-worship that had led the girl to regard introduction to her divinity as one of the greatest boons life could offer, the hope of kindred intercourse, and the pride with which she dreamt of saying, ‘I too am an author.’ And now Mrs. West had been smiling at the cruel words that condemned her efforts! Bitter

were the tears that fell ; bitter were the sufferings of wounded vanity in poor Evelyn's breast.

The authoress was very much astonished, but grasped the situation with her habitual keenness. She quickly sought a glass of water, and holding it to her guest's lips, said in a brisk, decided voice, ' There, there ! do not cry. Dry your tears and tell me all about it.'

Tears were very rare with Evelyn, and these were quickly dried, but they had brought relief. She could not choose but comply with her hostess's invitation, which sounded, indeed, very like a command ; and she was soon, though with faltering lips, in the midst of her story ; how her father used to write in the *Fortnightly* ; how he died when she was very young ; how she, too, loved writing, and had written poetry ever since she was eight years old ; how every one said her later poems were good enough to publish, except her uncle and the publisher, Mr. Wrexham ; how the book was published, and all her friends praised it ; and now this cruel review (which Evelyn spoke of with the bitterest resentment) made fun of her attempts.

' But, my dear Miss Hope, if you publish, you must be prepared for criticism. Look at me ! What would become of me, do you suppose, if I cried my eyes out over every unfavourable review ?'

' Ah, but you are different,' sighed Evelyn, truly enough. ' They all praise *you*.'

‘Now they may, but they did not at first. And I can assure you I learned some very helpful truths from my reviewers, though they were not always very palatable. Did you publish, may I ask, at your own expense?’

‘Yes,’ replied Evelyn.

‘Ah, that is never very wise. If a book is worth anything, you can generally find some publisher who will at least share the risk. But you wanted to see yourself in print. Was not that so?’

Evelyn could not but own it.

‘And you would not take the advice of those who had experience and judgment—your uncle, and Mr. Wrexham, whom I know very well?’

Evelyn was silent.

‘You see, Miss Hope, this is part of the price you have to pay for your enjoyment,’ resumed Mrs. West. ‘Every one is free to print what he writes; but every one is not free to command praise and flattery from the public.’

‘Do you think I ought not to have done it?’ faltered Evelyn.

‘I cannot tell until I read the poems themselves, but I think you are decidedly young to publish poetry; and these reviews are written by a friend of mine, who is usually very discriminating in his judgment.’

‘A friend of yours! Oh, please tell me his name,’ entreated Evelyn.

‘No, certainly not; it would not be fair, for he writes anonymously. After all, there is a

redeeming touch in this notice. Do you not see that he praises one poem ?'

'Very faint praise,' said poor Evelyn bitterly.

'Still, it should encourage you. And if you are not afraid to hear my candid opinion, lend me this little volume of yours.'

'I think I shall burn every copy,' declared Evelyn, with vehemence.

'No, don't do that. Make this book a stepping-stone to better things. The writer's art is not to be lightly entered on or flung petulantly aside,' declared Mrs. Allingham West, and as she spoke her dark eyes glowed. 'It is worth your pains ; if, indeed, you intend to publish, not for the sake of gratifying vanity, but in the hope of doing work worth the doing. Life is short, at the best, and Art is long ; but happy are those who in their brief career can do something, however little, to lift the thoughts of their fellow-men.'

She spoke musingly, and Evelyn looked upon her with a new impulse of adoration. Then she returned to her brief, decided tone.

'I must send you away, Miss Hope, for I have letters to despatch before supper ; but let me have this little book of yours, and in a few days' time I will ask you to come and see me again.'

Evelyn scarcely knew what she said, nor how she escaped to her room, where she flung herself down on her bed, in a tumult of excited feelings. After all, how kind Mrs. Allingham West had been ! It was disappointing that she

seemed to take sides with the reviewer instead of with Evelyn; 'But perhaps when she reads my poems she will alter her mind a little,' whispered Vanity. Then, after all, she had been in the same room with the celebrated authoress, taken tea from her hand, talked to her on equal terms! That was a glory and delight nothing could take away.

'Well,' cried Dottie, through the door of partition, 'do tell me all about it, Evelyn; oh, do!'

But Evelyn wished to remove the traces of tears from her eyes, and place her recollections of the eventful hour in order.

'Afterwards, Dot,' she answered.

'I don't believe Evelyn has enjoyed herself at all,' said Dottie, in confidence to Miss Wentworth, as they sat in the *salon* waiting for supper. 'I have only caught one glimpse of her since her grand visit, and she looked as if she had been crying.'

'Very likely,' replied the American. 'My opinion is that Mrs. Allingham West is haughty, and I am on the whole glad I did not go in for the interview myself.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE VALLEY AND ITS INHABITANTS.

. . . Like children reared in shade
Beneath some old-world abbey wall,
Forgotten in a forest glade,
And secret from the eyes of all.
Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
Their abbey, and its close of graves !

Matthew Arnold.



IT was Sunday,
and from an
early hour
the bell had
been resound-
ing over valley
and hill, calling
worshippers to
the monastery
church. Evelyn
and her party
of friends had
resolved to fol-
low the general

example of the English in visiting the edifice ;
so, at a little before nine, they went through
the bright, clean village, bathed in sunlight,
and entered the portals softly, without the
noisy, curious irreverence deprecated by the
Avis aux Etrangers. There was only standing

room for them and other visitors at the back of the seated multitude.

It certainly was a wonderful sight. The church was thronged with worshippers, chiefly of the peasant class, women on the one side, men on the other. The dress of the women was specially remarkable with regard to their headgear. Their hair was divided into rolls, one on each temple, and at the back was covered in two ways; either by a head-dress composed of tiny pieces of stiffened linen, or a sort of double spoon of steel. Through the linen head-dress were thrust long pins of silver metal, with filagree heads exquisitely wrought. These pins are greatly prized by their wearers, and are handed down as heirlooms from mother to daughter. On this occasion the majority of the women also wore white wreaths of artificial flowers. For the rest, their dress was composed of dark stuff, or of linen jacket and stuff skirt. The men gave less evidence of care in their attire, being, as a rule, in their shirt-sleeves!

In the pulpit a dignitary was preaching with an eloquence and fire that would have put many a Protestant clergyman to shame. Evelyn could scarcely understand the dialect of German in which he spoke, but one thing she *could* understand, that the sermon was all about angels—the angels who early indicated the site for the monastery, who gave their name to the valley, and who should be imitated by the privileged dwellers in so sacred a spot. Engel—Engel—Engel; the word recurred again and

again, as the preacher, nearing the close of his subject, dwelt with enthusiasm on the destiny before his hearers, who dwelt in the valley consecrated by angels, and who one day might hope themselves to rise to the angels' sphere. As the hour of nine drew near, the curtain veiling the screen before the chancel was noiselessly drawn aside by two attendant monks, and Evelyn caught a gleam of the glories of the altar-piece by Spiegler.

The mass that followed was long, and for the most part incomprehensible to Evelyn, but she understood at least the magnificent thunder of the organ in the *Kyrie eleison* and *Agnus Dei*. There seemed many officiating, and Evelyn remembered she had heard it was the first mass of a young priest. She suddenly became aware that the congregation were rising, and filing one by one through the chancel, depositing coins on a table before the altar. The men went first, followed by the women. What could be the meaning of this? The white flower wreaths were connected in some way with the ceremony. She tried to discover, inquiring afterwards of one or two old inhabitants of the place, but they could only reply, 'It is the first mass of a young priest; it is the custom here.'

At length the service with its magnificence and bewildering intricacy was over, and the villagers streamed forth, some for a distant journey home again; for they came from many miles round. It was all very wonderful and interesting to Evelyn. That such an elaborate

ceremonial, so largely attended, should be found in this remote Alpine valley seemed strange indeed, and her mind went pondering over the past. Ever since 1121 has this Benedictine foundation existed, and its history is full of incident.

The simpler service in the pretty little English church, filled to overflowing, brought help and refreshment. Evelyn tried to put away all thoughts of her book, of the terrible review, and to live as far as might be in gratitude to the Creator of the sublime beauty in which she was delighting.

‘Now, can’t we have a long excursion, all together?’ demanded Algy, next day, as the party met to enjoy their early rolls and coffee. ‘Every one of us; you too, mother.’

‘That depends, my dear, where you are going to,’ replied Mrs. Lancaster, a good-natured smile creasing her plump cheeks.

‘Well, I should like to go up to the very head of the valley, on the way to the Surenen Pass,’ proposed her son. ‘You could easily manage it—on a horse.’

Mrs. Lancaster shook her head.

‘None of your horses for me,’ she declared. ‘I shall be very happy at home.’

It was finally decided that Mrs. Lancaster should spend the morning in the enjoyment she loved best, sitting about in the hotel gardens, chatting to one and the other acquaintance, and that she should drive out to the Tätschbach-fall to meet the pedestrians for afternoon tea on their homeward way.

Before starting, Evelyn made a neat little parcel of *Day-dreams*, and sent it down to Mrs. Allingham West's door. With what fear and trembling she performed this act, and how different was her feeling from that with which she scattered copies broadcast on their first publication! She could scarcely bear to open the book now, and she knew that if she read the poems through again, she would never dare to submit them to the critical eye of her illustrious friend! Such change already had experience wrought in her.

Evelyn found herself walking by Madame Lichtenstein, whose face and manner attracted her greatly. The two women were drawn together by a sort of mutual sympathy, and soon found themselves talking quite confidentially.

'Yes, I love Engelberg more than any other place in Switzerland except Gimmelwald,' Madame Lichtenstein was saying.

'Except Gimmelwald! I never heard of it. Do you not mean Grindelwald?'

'No, Gimmelwald, a lovely spot high above the Lauterbrunnen-Thal. It was there I met my husband. I was a teacher of music in London. I went abroad with friends. I cannot tell you what that holiday was to me—poor, overworked, lonely. I met Herr Lichtenstein at the Pension Edelweiss there. He, too, was a professor of music, but of a very different stamp, as I need not say, from myself. But it is a long story—you do not want to be wearied with hearing it.'

Evelyn, however, did want to be 'wearied with hearing' it, and was gratified by her friend. As the story may not be unknown to some readers, it need not be repeated here in detail. The girl listened with great interest to the account of Esther Fielding's encounter with the critical professor *à propos* of music, her offence at his strictures, the performance of the *Moonlight Sonata*, the adventure upon the Schilthorn steeps, and the *dénoûment* of all.

'I do not know why I tell you this,' concluded Madame Lichtenstein. 'Sometimes one feels as though one could confide to a new friend what one does not tell to every old one.'

'It is a romantic story. I need not ask if it has turned out happily,' said Evelyn, deeply interested.

'I think I am the happiest woman in the world!' cried her friend; and she gave Evelyn many details of her congenial home life in her adopted country.

'I will tell you something in return, if you will let me, which I do not talk about even to Dottie,' said the girl; and to her *confidante's* willing ears she poured forth the account of her recent experiences and the interview with Mrs. Allingham West. Esther Lichtenstein listened with sympathy, putting in a gentle word or two now and then.

'Oh, you must not be discouraged,' she said. 'It is a great honour to have so well-known an authoress talk to you at all. Even if she criticises, you will not mind. And how much time



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you have before you! A long life, money, and friends to help you! You will study, and succeed. You must not expect to spring at once into full power.'

'Like the torrent yonder,' said Herr Lichtenstein, who had overheard the last sentence, and who pointed up the hillside to a broad, white stream, filling the air with noise and fury, and hurling itself down to the valley.

'What do you mean? Where does that river come from?' cried one and all; and they pressed up the side path to explore.

It was certainly a curious phenomenon. The torrent began suddenly, as a broad, deep stream, welling out of the earth, and rushing along its channel with as much force and violence as if it had risen in the correct manner high up under the heavens in a mountain spring, fed by numberless kindred rills, and growing in volume as it descended.

'So you want my display of talent to begin like that?' laughed Evelyn to Herr Lichtenstein. 'How very much I should take every one by surprise!'

Herr Lichtenstein's reply was oracular.

'That stream has long been gathering force in silence and in dark,' he said. 'Only so could the waters well forth in power and abundance.'

'Very good, Herr Lichtenstein! I should like to be allowed to put that down in my commonplace book,' interposed Miss Wentworth.

'Madam?' inquired the uncomprehending musician. But when it was explained to him,

he laughed joyously. 'Your book of common-places? Even so, madam; that will be a fitting place for it.'

They had been walking along the floor of the valley, through fields and woodland, for some time, and they now reached the Tätschbach-fall. This is the one short excursion from Engelberg that everybody makes. The white leap of the torrent above the forests, seen from afar, irresistibly draws the pedestrian; the signboards pointing in its direction, the carriage road, the footpath all point it out as a fitting goal. To make it easier still of access, a waggonette runs several times a day to and fro. The party from the Felsberg sat for a while outside the little hostelry looking on the waterfall and wondering why the game of gigantic ninepins always reappeared at every crisis of natural beauty; then they left the haunts of sightseers behind, and went on and on into a far more lovely region, where the carriage road vanishes, where the glen narrows, and the glaciers approach more daringly towards the valley. They walked through exquisite woodland with the Engelberger Aa foaming on their right and the mountains towering at every glimpse among the trees more nearly overhead. Then they left the wood and came out on wild moorland dotted with a group of *châlets*. They could no longer discern Engelberg, for the vale makes a sharp deflection towards the left. Anon a cleft with a white rush of water just appearing against the edge of the chasm came into view.

‘That is the Stierenbach-fall—the fall of the Steer’s Brook,’ said Miss Wentworth, stopping ; ‘and I’ll just tell you about the legend, if you like.’

All expressed willingness, seating themselves on the moorland, and Miss Wentworth began—

‘There was once, several hundred years ago, a peasant, who so loved a favourite calf that he baptized it by a Christian name. This displeased Heaven, and the calf became a terrible monster, devouring all the pasture in the valley of Engelberg and for miles over the hills. Then came a message by a holy friar to the villagers that they must take a young bull, without spot or blemish, feed it only on pure milk for a certain number of years, and let it loose to fight with the monster. This was done. The bull—or steer—found the monster on these heights, closed with him in single combat, and they both fell together into the brook and were drowned.’

‘Miss Wentworth, you know everything,’ cried Dottie.

‘Awfully interesting! only I don’t quite see the moral,’ observed Algy, pulling up handfuls of the short, stunted grass as he spoke.

‘There isn’t any moral; it’s a simple statement of fact,’ rejoined Madame Lichtenstein.

‘Evelyn shall write a poem on the legend,’ said Algy. ‘Rather hard for the steer to be drowned, don’t you think so? All right for the monster, but not for the good animal. Now then, Lichtenstein, can’t you dispose of that by some moral reflections?’

‘I will very soon dispose of *you*, my young friend,’ rejoined the professor. ‘The way down into the torrent is very steep and very short ; another word, and down you roll !’

‘I thought it was more in your line to rescue distressed personages off Alpine ledges than pitch them over,’ observed the incorrigible Algy, fleeing away from the vengeance threatened by his Leipsic friend. And so, with merry talk and laughter, they climbed the hillside by the fall, and came out upon wild, rounded heights at the very head of the Engelberger-Thal. Mountains towered around them, and the path to the Surenen Pass led away in the distance. From yonder ridge they knew that Lake Lucerne could be descried.

The men went on to the summit of the pass, but the women preferred to rest in this lofty, scented pasture, threaded by its brook, with the Alpine air bringing health, life, vivacity in every breath. When they reassembled, they spread luncheon—though Evelyn declared it was sacrilege to think of eating—and glad sallies of mirth and conversation rang through the solitude. A little herd-boy was the only other human creature visible, and him they plentifully enriched with the fragments of their meal.

So the day passed—one of those days long to be remembered, when the joy of God’s world stirs the pulses of His creatures with such intensity that the sorrows of humanity seem far away, and the heart throbs in unison with the Divine satisfaction in His work—‘And behold it was very good.’

CHAPTER XII.

INTELLECT AND FANCY.

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean ;
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion.
Nothing in the world is single,
All things, by a law divine,
In one another's being mingle,
Why not I with thine?

Shelley.

THE strains of a German waltz were rising and falling through the music-room and hall of the Felsberg Hotel. It was evening, and some of the younger visitors were diverting themselves by an informal dance. Among them were Evelyn and Algy. Waltzing was one accomplishment the young man possessed in perfection, and although he was rather too short to match Evelyn as a partner, the grace of their motion as they swam together round the room atoned in critical eyes for this disparity. Through the open French windows came the sweet breath of the night air, and the dancers stepped forth ever and anon into the moonlit gardens to wander along the dusky walks and see the faint distant shimmer of the Titlis snows.

‘How well these fellows play!’ cried Algy, referring to the hired performers on harp,

violin, piano. 'I could go on for ever. I am enjoying to-night more than any night since I came here. What a pity we don't dance after supper every evening!'

'You would not enjoy it so much if we did,' replied Evelyn sagely.

Just at this moment a waiter looked in at the door over the eddying circle with an expression of bewilderment. He held a note on a salver, and by-and-by made Evelyn aware it was for her.

It contained a few words from Mrs. Allingham West, saying that she would be glad to see Miss Hope that evening for an hour—if she were not otherwise engaged.

'But you *are* otherwise engaged,' cried Algy, 'very much engaged. Just send a verbal message to tell her so. I call it very cheeky to suppose you can run off at a moment's notice to dance attendance upon her.'

Cheeky! What an adjective to apply to a distinguished authoress! Evelyn shuddered at the profanity, and told her cousin she must certainly go, and that at once.

Algy was not accustomed to have his enjoyment interfered with, and when he found that his arguments were of no avail he waxed exceedingly cross.

'Send up your American friend instead,' he urged.

'But I want to see her. It is the very greatest honour and privilege. Don't keep me, Algy.'

‘Well, I do call it too bad; the band won’t be here again; and to spoil a fellow’s enjoyment like this!’

‘My dear Algy, I have given you four waltzes already, and there are plenty of nice girls for you to dance with. Don’t be so absurd!’ And Evelyn had flown.

Mrs. West, alone in her lamp-lit sitting-room, received her with dignified kindness.

‘I hear that some friends from England are going to join me to-morrow,’ she explained, ‘and as this is my last lonely evening, I thought we might have a little talk together about your book.’

‘You are very kind,’ faltered Evelyn.

Mrs. Allingham West, in her black lace draperies, her pale, intellectual face lit by the soft radiance of the lamp, seemed to the girl more worshipful than ever. *Day-dreams*, lying in its white fanciful cover on the table, appeared irrelevant and trivial in her presence. Evelyn would have liked to take it up and hurl it out of the window into the darkness. But it had to be discussed.

‘I have read your poems,’ said Mrs. West, looking kindly at the flushed, downcast face of the young authoress.

‘Oh, please don’t say anything about them!’ broke out Evelyn. ‘I know they are *perfectly idiotic*.’

‘How long is it since you came to that conclusion?’ asked her hostess, in amusement.

‘I don’t know exactly. It has all had some-

thing to do with it,' stammered Evelyn. 'Seeing the beauty of Switzerland and hearing Herr Lichtenstein play has made me feel that Nature, and Art too, are far beyond my power of expressing them. Our clever American friend didn't like the book either, I could see. And then speaking to you——' The girl stopped.

'And the review? Had that any influence?'

'I don't know. I think it was too bad to make fun of the poems like that. Oh, how I wish I hadn't published the stupid things!' cried Evelyn, in sudden indignation.

Mrs. West saw that this was no mere mock modesty.

'Well, then, you will not be very angry with me for the advice I am going to give you, which is—publish no more poetry. I will not agree with you as to "stupid" and "idiotic," and so forth; but very rare power is required for the poet—a deep insight into Nature and the human heart, and a power of musical expression also. Unless these exist together in some measure, there is no true poetry. Do you remember what Carlyle says in his *Heroes*?'

Mrs. West reached down a volume from the shelf, turned to a page, and read,—

"It is only when the heart of him is rapt into true passion of melody, and the very tones of him become musical by the greatness, depth, and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers, whose speech is Song."

‘But I felt as if I must write poetry,’ said Evelyn timidly.

‘Yes. I did not say, Write no more. All young authors, I believe, write verse ; it is a way of expressing thoughts and vague aspirations to which they can give vent in no other manner. And in its way it is good, for it gives command of language and improves the style. I know I wrote a great deal myself in my teens, but fortunately I could not afford to publish, or I daresay I should have done the same thing as yourself.’

This was very comforting to poor Evelyn, who had actually come to feel as if the volume that was once her highest crown of pride were a brand of disgrace, so great had been the change wrought in a few short weeks.

‘What do you advise me to do?’ she said humbly. ‘I feel as if life would be dreadfully uninteresting after I get back to London, if I give up writing.’

‘Oh, do not do that. There are touches, here and there, especially in “The Lark,” which make me think you have some talent. But there is plenty of time before you. What you should do is to study. Study the great masters of style ; become familiar with their thoughts and their way of expressing those thoughts. Read the masterpieces of literature, ancient and modern. Study some one subject, if you have any bent in one particular direction. Then as to writing,—I believe you would do best in prose. Have you ever tried your hand at a story?’

‘Once or twice,’ said Evelyn, recollecting her sketch of the maid on the Engstlen-Alp.

‘Well, I began with poetry, but I am not a poet. And if you would like to try prose writing, I can give you a few rules that have been helpful to me. Observe closely all that passes around you, and practise the art of writing an exact, not a vague, description of what you have seen, so as, in few words, to bring a person, place, or incident before a reader’s mind. Never write of what you know nothing about. Don’t reproduce secondhand imitations of other people’s work, but be yourself always, and be yourself at as high a level as you can. Try and write something every day. Don’t be discouraged if at first your brain works slowly—ease will come with practice; but—don’t write about anything in which you feel no interest. There are a few homely lines by Matthew Arnold which contain common sense—

“What poets feel not, when they make,
A pleasure in creating,
The world in *its* turn will not take
Pleasure in contemplating.”

This, although scarcely expressed in so set and formal a manner, was the pith of Mrs. Allingham West’s advice to her young friend.

Evelyn never forgot that interview. She tried to treasure up every word that fell from the authoress’s lips, and succeeded in preserving a tolerably clear recollection of the conversation from beginning to end. One idea she gained, that work—hard, continuous, diligent—was a

necessity for the profession of writing, as for every other profession. This was rather new to Evelyn, who had had a vague idea that a sudden frenzy came upon an author of genius, that with wildly rolling eyes he or she seized the pen and dashed off in a few hours work that would endure. Evelyn knew that *her* poems had given her very little labour, save the hunting for rhymes!

But, if the profession were arduous, it was, as Mrs. Allingham West assured her, one that had no ordinary degree of delight in its exercise.

‘For, whatever position you may occupy in after years, you will have this assurance—that you can influence your fellows. Whether young or old, many or few, after all are but secondary considerations. The power of the pen is the magician’s wand of modern days, and if it should be yours, never stoop to make any use of it below the best that you can. Keep your ideal high.’

Evelyn scarcely knew how she thanked her friend, nor how she left the room. A kind of delicious despair had taken possession of her—fear that she should never write again, yet a tremulous hope that after all she might realize something of the delightful vision placed before her by the woman who had the power to hold thousands spellbound.

That was Evelyn’s last interview at Engelberg with Mrs. Allingham West. A tribe of friends—distinguished people, Lady This, the

Hon. Mr. and Mrs. That—arrived at the hotel on the following day, took possession of suites of rooms on the same floor as Mrs. West, and effectually shut out any further intercourse. Evelyn felt a little sadly how far she was socially and intellectually below the eminent woman who had stretched out a beckoning hand from her serene heights to the wandering toiler below. But she lived on her two previous interviews, and built up many plans for the future.

‘I shall be sorry to leave Engelberg,’ broke out Algy. He and his cousin were standing on a bridge over a raging torrent. From distant heights two streams came thundering down through forest, to mingle at this point in foam and whirl and eddying tumult—the Arnitobel, as the cataract was called. The woods were all around.

‘So shall I, indeed,’ said Evelyn. ‘I don’t think I have ever enjoyed a holiday so much in my life.’

‘I’m awfully glad to hear you say that,’ replied Algy. The thunder of the waters made it necessary to speak at an unromantically loud pitch of voice, which Algy perceiving, proposed that they should adjourn to a seat on the further bank, a little away from the rush and roar.

‘It was too bad to leave me the other night,’ he observed. ‘I didn’t enjoy the dancing at all after you went.’

‘Then I am sure it was your own fault, for there were plenty of partners for you, better

suited to you than I am.' Evelyn was sorry when she had said this, for Algy was sensitive on the point of his height, and flushed up now. Bending down, he flung a stone into the torrent.

'It's all very well to scoff at a fellow because he's not tall——'

'I never had any such idea,' interrupted Evelyn truthfully.

'But *I* think we are very well suited to each other in every way.'

'Cousins ought to get on well, and you and I always have been good friends,' replied Evelyn, wondering at this unusually sentimental turn in the conversation.

She was still further astonished when he went on—

'I've been thinking that these two torrents are something like your life and mine.'

'So noisy and turbulent! Oh, I hope not!' cried Evelyn, laughing.

'No, no! I don't mean that; I mean—you see, they have flowed in separate channels till they reach this place, and now they flow in one.' Algy's face was crimson with his poetic effort.

'So you have been in Germany, I in England, and now we are going to live in the same house?' asked Evelyn wonderingly. 'What has made you get so very pictorial all at once?'

'I thought you liked poetry and all that kind of thing,' said Algy ruefully.

There is no knowing what he might have

said in explanation if he had not perceived the form of his mother slowly descending the woodland path beyond the stream, assisted by Miss Wentworth and Dottie.

There was one advantage in Evelyn's absorption in her literary efforts. Mr. Austin Hope, in the midst of his vexation at her determination to publish, had admitted 'she might do worse'; and her preoccupation had left no room in her brain for the constant dreaming over possible lovers and match-making which fills so many girlish heads, to the exclusion of anything else. She regarded Algy only as a brother. Like brother and sister they had been brought up in one home, and she scarcely recognised the fact that he had now arrived at man's estate. He, on his part, easily susceptible, had during the last few weeks come to regard Evelyn with altogether different eyes, and every day spent together in the witching haunts of Switzerland had added to his newly-born attachment. It was fortunate for Evelyn's enjoyment of the Arnitobel scenery that he had not further opportunities on this excursion for developing his views. They climbed the hill to the Schwendi-Alp, admired the glorious prospect of the sunlit Spannörter peaks, and returned, regretting that one more day was gone, and that their Engelberg stay would soon be past.

CHAPTER XIII.

FAREWELL TO ENGELBERG.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep,
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Keats.

IT was the very last day of the Lancasters' stay in Engelberg, and they were spending it, not in any long excursion, but in wandering about the village to which they had all grown attached. In the afternoon Herr Lichtenstein played upon the organ in the church ; he had done so several times before, by special permission from the abbot. Evelyn felt a pathetic enjoyment in sitting there, listening to an arrangement of Gounod's *Ave Maria*. Exquisitely soft and beseeching came the earlier strains, rising to melodious thunder as the passion grew more intense. Through the great building, with its many pictures, its faint smell of incense, surged and rolled the waves of sound, controlled, nevertheless, by the hand of a master, for ere long they began to subside, and finally, in loveliest sighing, sank to rest.

Evelyn would gladly have sat there and listened to his playing for hours, but it might not be, and, with Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie, she wandered forth again, crossed the river, and roamed through the woodland paths.

'I shall always feel sorry I didn't go over the monastery,' said Mrs. Lancaster, regretfully regarding the long rows of windows with here and there a monkish form appearing. 'Ever since I saw the monks the other day, winding in a long line, for all the world like a black serpent, up the hill, I have felt I would just give anything to see how they live, poor fellows.'

'Oh, mother, they wouldn't let you in,' Dottie insisted.

'Why, whatever harm do they suppose I should do them?' argued her mother. But no unknown stranger, man or woman, is allowed to visit the ancient precincts, and Mrs. Lancaster was obliged to be content.

There were many little details to be discussed among the three ladies. Miss Wentworth, who had faithfully adhered to her friends all through their stay at Engelberg, was going back to England with them. She intended to remain in London for some months at least, and without any *mauvaise honte* had arranged to travel with the Lancaster party. Evelyn had grown to like her; Algy was the only one who objected, but he was powerless. Then they had to decide whether they should go back to town at once, or linger on the sea coast to enjoy the breezes of late September. It was arranged that this should be done, but not at Dover.

'There is a lovely little place, St. Margaret's, near, which I am sure you would like, auntie,' suggested Evelyn. And rooms were accordingly

to be written for at the hotel. Miss Wentworth would in any case go straight on to London.

Mrs. Allingham West had quitted Engelberg with her party, bidding Evelyn a civil farewell, but not giving her any invitation to come and see her in town. This roused Mrs. Lancaster's indignation.

'I do think she might have paid her respects to me, but she passed me the day she said "good-bye" to you, with never a look,' complained the lady bitterly; 'and who was she, I should like to know, before she wrote this book? As poor as a church mouse, I daresay.'

'She can't know everybody. It was not meant as any lack of respect to you, auntie dear,' explained Evelyn, uncomfortably aware that Mrs. Lancaster, sitting in the *salon* after supper in a gorgeous red dress and a face as red in a different tint, would not be hailed by Mrs. Allingham West as a kindred spirit. And the fact is that, beset as she was by troops of friends and admirers of her talent, Mrs. West was obliged in self-defence to be sparing of invitations which would she knew be rapturously accepted. She had liked Evelyn, but she thought her poems for the most part very commonplace, and she did not feel quite sure enough as to the girl's character and abilities to invite her to continue the friendship. She reflected, with truth, that she could not know in London every sentimental young lady she met on her travels—they were too numerous; so she postponed any further

advance to the possibilities of the future, resolving to keep Evelyn's card in some stray corner.

Herr Lichtenstein and his wife were going to stay a few days longer at Engelberg. That night Algy walked to and fro for an hour along the terrace path behind the hotel with his two Leipsic friends, pouring forth to them his anxieties and hopes, which, indeed, they had hardly failed to guess.

'Already! Why, my young friend, I thought you told us you were hopelessly attached to a German maiden in Heidelberg,' observed Herr Lichtenstein, rather sardonically. 'The fair Elspeth with the flaxen plaits—what of her?'

'Oh, that was nothing,' said Algy, in confusion.

'Nothing! Why, when you arrived at Leipsic you told us——'

'Never mind, Max,' broke in Esther good naturedly.

'It is a good thing he did not bring matters to a crisis with Fräulein Elspeth, or there would be *somebody* who would mind,' declared the professor. But he was very good-natured on the whole, and listened to Algy's fervent assertions with much paternal benevolence.

"'Faint heart never won fair lady,'" he quoted, 'and you had better not delay too long if you wish to win your cousin.'

But when Algy had gone into the hotel, and the lover-like husband and wife were lingering beneath the moon, Herr Lichtenstein asked Esther if she thought there were much hope for Algy, and with emphasis she answered—

‘None whatever. My only comfort about the boy is that he will soon forget.’

‘The home life will be strained for *her*,’ mused the professor pitifully.

But neither he nor his wife could make the path of others so smooth and sunny as their own.

Early the next morning there was the usual group round the hotel door that attended on departures, and the last farewells were said. Oh, these farewells in Switzerland! how sadly they fall! They mean the breaking up of a charmed circle of friends and of associations that one can never form again in the same way; they mean the translation into memory of a present that is sometimes almost too bright for reality. But the final good-bye was uttered, and the carriage drove away, along Pferd-Himmel and down, down through the forests, till the mountain land was left behind, and the station at Lucerne was reached in the hot, bustling afternoon.

The journey was uneventful, and it seemed to Evelyn a startlingly short time before they were established at St. Margaret’s. This Algy termed ‘being let down gently’ before they returned to London for the late autumn and the winter. In sooth, the upland downs and abrupt cliffs of that charming spot, with the wide expanse of sea, were in one way a pleasant contrast to the inland beauties of Engelberg. Evelyn was glad to have the time of quiet to muse over her delightful and eventful visit to Switzerland. How much had happened since

she sailed across that blue expanse to the coasts which stood out so clearly across the Channel! She had learned wisdom, and was scarcely sadder for the learning, for she had Hope as her companion. When she was back in her charming study at The Elms, she would begin to act on Mrs. Allingham West's advice—to read diligently, to practise her pen, to set herself in real earnest to do something worth the doing. As for *Day-dreams*, she hated the very name of the book. Her poems appeared to her fatuous and foolish with scarcely one exception, for there is nothing akin to the scorn and distaste with which an enlightened young author regards work that has been outgrown.

Pleasant visions were these all, but they were scarcely destined to fulfilment. For on the day after their arrival at St. Margaret's Algy sought an explanation with Evelyn. The two were sitting on some rocks at the base of the cliffs, Evelyn idly watching the slow advance of the sea, when Algy suddenly broke forth, and told her he was living on the hope that before very long they two should be husband and wife.

'It is all settled with my mother and Dottie,' he eagerly insisted, while Evelyn sat petrified into an image of dismay. 'You know The Elms will be mine some day, and mother proposes that we should establish ourselves there at once. The house is large enough for us all, and we could easily have part of it allotted to us and shut off from the rest; that is, if you didn't object; but you have always been like

mother's own daughter, and she is so good-tempered—so is Dot—I think we should have an awfully jolly time of it. Then there's no reason to wait; I am only going to the Bar for the look of the thing; mother will make it easy for me to marry, so it might be before Christmas. Why don't you speak, Evelyn?'

As soon as Evelyn could recover from the shock of this startling proposal, she assured Algy that it was altogether out of the question.

'We are first cousins, and I never thought of anything of the kind as possible.'

'Cousins do marry very often,' urged Algy. And he entreated and protested, growing almost frantic at Evelyn's persistent refusal; for never in his life had he failed to get what he wanted.

'It is some nonsense about your devoting your life to literature, I suppose, and that kind of thing, but you'll get over that, Evelyn. It wouldn't be fair to let you think I should allow my wife to publish, for I shouldn't,' asserted Algy candidly. 'But I should imagine that review has rather altered your ideas. You ought not to be knocked about in the world. I'll take care of you when we are married; no impertinent scoundrel of a penny-a-liner shall say a word to vex you. You will be far happier sheltered as my wife than running the risks of public life in any shape.'

'You are very, very good, Algy, but it can never be,' declared Evelyn, with decision. 'Pray do put it altogether out of your head, and let us be like brother and sister as we used to.'

It is needless to add that this suggestion failed entirely, as indeed it invariably does fail in similar cases. Evelyn's heart sank lower and lower, as the full position made itself gradually plain to her. She was dreadfully sorry for Algy, and what would become of her? for Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie, she knew, would both be on his side. But she kept her ground, in spite of her distress and his persistence.

'What can be the matter with Algy?' exclaimed Dottie, as they were sitting on the downs in the afternoon. 'There he is—not reading a line, but staring over the sea quite moodily. He hasn't spoken two words since luncheon. Has anything happened to vex him, I wonder?'

Evelyn reflected whether she should speak out; it was misery to her, but she felt it was best to get it over. Mrs. Lancaster was just out of hearing, leaning against a little bank, and nodding drowsily under her parasol in the afternoon sun.

'I am afraid I am the cause, Dottie.'

'You!' cried Dottie, perusing her cousin's face. 'Oh, Evelyn! has he spoken to you?'

Poor Evelyn nodded, and added with difficulty, 'It can't ever be, Dottie. I am very very sorry.'

Dottie threw up her hands and burst into tears.

'What can I say? What can I do?' cried Evelyn, stricken to the heart. Her tone unfortunately reached Mrs. Lancaster, who,



starting up to show she had not been dozing, came with slow, panting steps to the two girls.

‘Crying, Dottie? Why, what’s wrong, my dear?’

‘Evelyn has refused Algy,’ wailed Dottie, too miserable to think of tact or concealment.

‘Oh, what shall we do?’

‘Refused our Algy!’ cried the mother, when the idea had penetrated her somewhat lethargic brain. ‘Nonsense, my dear; you don’t know what you are talking about.’

This was all much worse than anything Evelyn had imagined; and yet she might have expected it, for Algy was the very apple of his mother’s eye, the idol of his sister. In many a cosy talk together during the last few weeks the two women had planned how the home should be made comfortable and beautiful for Algy and his bride. No expectation of Evelyn’s refusal had ever entered into either of their heads; for was she not very fond of him? and what woman to whom Algernon Lancaster should throw his handkerchief would fail to pick it up?

But Dottie wept on, and Evelyn sat mute and tearless.

‘If what you say is true,’ said Mrs. Lancaster, at last, turning redder than ever in the excitement, ‘Evelyn is a very unkind and ungrateful girl; but I don’t believe it; there is some mistake. It couldn’t be; why, they have always been so fond of one another!’

‘Yes, and that is one reason,’ cried poor

Evelyn. 'He never thought of it—no more did I—till within the last six weeks. Why cannot we go back to what used to be? We were just like brother and sister!'

'I used to think of it,' retorted Mrs. Lancaster; 'but I didn't see that Algy's fancy went that way, so, as we can't control these things, I said nothing about it. But now that his heart is set on it, poor, dear lad—to think that my sister's own child should be the one to disappoint us all!'

The subject of these agitating remarks caught the sound of his mother's last words, uttered under considerable excitement and in a heightened tone. He rose and strolled up to them. Evelyn thought he looked smaller than ever in his dejection, and felt intensely sorry for him.

'Don't trouble your heads about me,' he said, easily guessing the purport of the conversation from the condition of all three women; 'I shall take the evening train up to town. I shall go to an hotel.'

'Oh, Algy, darling! if you must go, they will have everything ready so nicely for you at The Elms. I will telegraph to Mrs. Grainger.'

'I don't want to go to The Elms. I don't suppose I shall go back there at all,' retorted Algy, careless of the unspeakable dismay this suggestion caused to his mother. He turned on his heel and walked away.

'Poor, dear boy!' cried Mrs. Lancaster, bursting into tears. 'See what you have done, Evelyn! You have broken up our home!'

CHAPTER XIV.

EVELYN'S CONSOLATION.

Books are a guide in youth, and an entertainment for age. They help us to forget the crossness of men and things, compose our cares and our passions, and lay our disappointments asleep.—*Jeremy Collier.*

THE country lanes and breezy downs of St. Margaret - atte - Cliffe have seldom been trodden by a more lonely creature than was Evelyn Hope on the days succeeding the *dénoûment* with Algy. She took long and solitary walks early and late, going over and over again the dismal round. Her happy life was suddenly devastated. And yet it was by no calamity; rather by what many women would have considered a lucky turn in Fortune's wheel. Wealth and an assured home were placed within her reach; and by some strange irony this very circumstance drove her forth from the good things of this life she already possessed.

For Evelyn could not stay at The Elms; that became clear to her very speedily. Mrs. Lancaster should not be separated from her only son, Dottie from her adored brother, whose home-coming after his college course had been so eagerly anticipated by both. Besides, these two dear friends, who had given her so much care and love, seemed now suddenly, cruelly

estranged from the desolate girl. Mrs. Lancaster's love for her orphan niece was fought down by her idolatry of her son, her anger at the baffling of his hopes. Dottie, too, thought Evelyn wayward, unreasonable, and unkind to spoil the fair scheme of life that opened so temptingly for all. Neither could understand Evelyn's refusal. Not care for Algy! she easily could if she tried; it was altogether inconceivable that she should not. So they hardened their hearts against her, thinking, perhaps, that this was one way of driving her to consent to what would be so greatly to her own advantage.

'For Evelyn has only two hundred a year of her own,' said Mrs. Lancaster to Dottie; 'all very ample when she lives with us, but if anything happened to me, where would she be, I should like to know, with her expensive tastes? The child must be mad to refuse Algy.'

Dottie shook her head, and had recourse to tears once more,

Meanwhile Evelyn felt she had imperative need of advice and help from somebody, now that her own familiar friends had turned against her. Her uncle, Mr. Austin Hope, was in Italy, and she was never much inclined to confide in him, as the reader knows. Who else was there? None of their home neighbours would be suitable. Suddenly she thought of Miss Wentworth. The American lady had been with them all through the Engelberg stay;

she knew the situation, she was shrewd and kind. Evelyn would write to her London address.

The letter was forthwith written and posted; and while Evelyn was wandering forlornly over the breezy fields on the following morning, she caught sight of an open fly coming from the station, and a neat blue bonnet that looked familiar on the head of its solitary occupant.

'It can't be Miss Wentworth already!' thought the girl, with an eager throb of excitement, and she pressed forward to the roadside.

Miss Wentworth had seen Evelyn, and imperiously stopping the driver, had jumped out, crossed the stile, and hurried to meet her. Never had the delicate, withered face looked so kind and welcome as now.

'Come to the hotel in time to catch the three o'clock up train,' ordered Miss Wentworth, calling to the flyman, after her embrace with Evelyn. 'Now, my dear, you must tell me more about all this. Let us go a walk on the cliffs before lunch-time.'

'How good you are to come to me!' cried Evelyn. 'Oh, I have been so wretched ever since Friday!'

'And you did not foresee it?'

'No; how could I? You see, Miss Wentworth, Algy and I have been like brother and sister ever since we were children together. He never used to have such a thought till quite lately.'

'Ah, he had been away from you,' pondered

Miss Wentworth ; ' you met with a little of the old familiarity rubbed off ; well, it can't be helped. And so his mother and sister do not take it in good part ? '

' Auntie is very angry with me, for the first time in her life. Dottie is not so angry, but is very miserable and reproachful. I don't know how to bear grieving them.'

' Ah, well, my dear, it is natural enough, but time will mend all that. Do not fret too much over it. And as for Mr. Algernon—is it quite out of the question ? '

' Perfectly,' assured Evelyn. ' I am fond of him, but not in that way, and I never could be. I have always looked on him as a sort of younger brother, to laugh and amuse myself with. We don't sympathise in any of the earnest things of life. Oh no, I could not marry him.'

The elder lady's worn face had grown sadder as she listened, with one thin hand drawn inside Evelyn's arm.

' Better no marriage than an uncongenial one, my dear child. Ah, Evelyn, I could tell you a story of my own life to show I think with you on that point. Don't dread being an old maid so much as marrying for the sake of a home, or because people try to worry you into it. If you are thoroughly sure about it, then just go your own way. And I think you are right ; for I don't believe in first cousins marrying. However, that's all beside the point. You are to come back with me to London, and stay with

me for the present. Don't say a word ; I shall take no denial. I have delightful rooms in Bayswater ; we will make them homelike, you shall cheer me up, and we will be as happy as possible. You shall show the Amurrican all about this London of yours. So go and pack up your boxes while I make it straight with Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie. I see them down on the beach yonder.'

Miss Wentworth would take no denial. She waived aside all difficulties, and to poor Evelyn her proposal seemed like a way of escape from a terrible dilemma. For how could she go back to The Elms feeling that she was exiling the son of the house, and at cross purposes with her aunt and cousin ? She would be utterly wretched. The future seemed very dark, but for the present she needed shelter and leisure to think what she would do, unembarrassed by the daily contact that had grown so painful.

Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie were much astonished to see Miss Wentworth descending from the cliffs ; but they had little to oppose when she explained her scheme with the brevity and directness peculiar to her.

'Isn't it a grievous thing now, about poor Algy, Miss Wentworth ?' appealed Mrs. Lancaster.

But the American lady shook her head.

'I never enter into family quarrels. I am here only to relieve Evelyn and yourself from what must be a most unpleasant position, for the next month or two,' she said. 'You and

she can consider what is best to be done afterwards.'

So all four ladies ate their luncheon together, pretending hypocritically that Evelyn was going on a little visit of civility and pleasure to Miss Wentworth ; pretending, as women have to pretend under such circumstances, and never dwelling on the pain and distress underlying it all. Mrs. Lancaster kissed the girl kindly enough when they parted, and Dottie entirely broke down. She clung round Evelyn's neck in a passion of tears.

'Nothing else could have parted us—nothing—nothing. Oh, Evelyn, won't you be my sister ? Do think how happy we should all be at The Elms !'

Evelyn would not trust herself to speak, and was thankful to be driven away from the inn. Miss Wentworth did not worry her with questions, but showed her the tenderest consideration on the journey, letting her alone, save for little attentions to every detail of her comfort.

'After all, my dear, it is a great blessing she is gone,' said Mrs. Lancaster to Dottie. 'Now we can write to your brother at once, and arrange to meet him at The Elms to-morrow ; I daresay, too, separation from us will be the very best thing for Evelyn. It will bring her to a right state of feeling, and lead her to appreciate what she is throwing away.'

'I hope so,' said Dorothy ; but there was very little hope in her voice.

'I can't help thinking,' mused Mrs. Lancas-

ter, 'that Mrs. Allingham West must have set her against Algy.'

'Why, mother, Mrs. West did not so much as know of Algy's existence.'

'Don't you be too sure of that,' retorted the elder lady. 'And I daresay, what with her thinking herself so clever, because of writing that book and all, she set up Evelyn with the idea that Algy was beneath her, because *he* doesn't choose to write verses. Poor dear fellow!'

'I don't think Mrs. Allingham West "set up" Evelyn at all,' replied Dottie.

But Mrs. Lancaster was penetrated by her new idea, and became hopeful by degrees that when the pernicious influence of Mrs. West should have withdrawn its baleful glamour, the star of Algy would rise triumphantly in the horizon.

It is wonderful how the mildest of women can suddenly become a very lioness for fury when she thinks her offspring is injured! Poor Evelyn had not had sufficient experience of human nature to understand this transformation of her good-tempered, easy-going aunt, whom she had always regarded as pliant and kindly to the last degree. The love between aunt and niece, while not perhaps very intense or sympathetic in character, had grown through long years of intercourse, and Evelyn felt as though part of her old self had fallen from her.

Her stay with Miss Wentworth had, nevertheless, fresh pleasures of its own. It was

something entirely new for Evelyn to be brought into hourly contact with a mind possessing superior stores of information. At The Elms, in her debating society, among her familiar friends, she had always been the leader—admired, looked up to, honoured, praised, and flattered. Her stock of knowledge, to use a familiar expression, ‘went a very long way’ among these satellites; with Miss Wentworth it went a very short way indeed.

One point in which this was particularly manifest was the very little Evelyn knew about London itself and its historical associations. Miss Wentworth was full of them to her very finger-tips, and was astounded when she mentioned this and that historical event to find that Evelyn did not know where it had taken place.

‘Never been to the Tower of London!’ she ejaculated, opening her bright black eyes to their fullest extent. ‘What! never been in the Beauchamp Tower?’

‘No,’ acknowledged Evelyn; ‘I always thought it wasn’t the thing to do; a sort of thing excursionists did on Bank Holidays.’

‘This isn’t a Bank Holiday, so put on your hat at once,’ ordered Miss Wentworth. And Evelyn, to her surprise, found herself enjoying a most delightful morning—a morning rich in imaginative pictures of the most thrilling description, as she wandered through the historic scenes, and studied the inscriptions—pathetic past all telling—on the walls of that prison

where poor Lady Jane Grey spent the last days of her ebbing life. Her companion knew exactly what to see and how to see it.

'Why, I have always thought I would see the Tower of London the very first thing when I came to England. I have just dreamed of it,' she said, in reply to Evelyn's expression of surprise.

Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery, the British Museum, Hampton Court—all these places Evelyn found herself obliged to explore anew, and to examine by the help of a stranger's appreciation. November is not usually considered an ideal month in which to go sight-seeing in London, but as a matter of fact it often presents rich store of mild and sunshiny days, and it did so in the year of Miss Wentworth's visit to Europe. The two ladies made good use of their mornings; the close of the brief afternoon found them at home again, enjoying their cup of tea with full zest after their labours. Then came long, cosy evenings, when they read in turn, and Evelyn drank in fresh thought and knowledge. For her clever friend soon found out what she had not read that she *ought* to read without delay, and supplied the lack as best she could. Miss Wentworth purposely discouraged Evelyn from writing; her mind required diversion, and she was just in a condition to derive benefit from new ideas and new information.

'Never was *Day-dreams* mentioned between them. No further reviews had appeared,

though Evelyn furtively searched the papers. It seemed to have sunk absolutely from sight and sound, like a stone tossed into a lake and causing only a momentary ripple. But one day they chanced to pass Messrs. Dalrymple's monster establishment, and Evelyn broke out—

‘That was where they published my wretched book.’

‘Don't you want to go in and ask how it is selling?’ suggested Miss Wentworth.

‘No! I don't believe one copy has been sold, except those I had myself! I have never heard a word about it from Mr. Dalrymple, or had a penny back out of what I spent.’

Evelyn was incorrect in her supposition. Six copies had been sold; people had bought them for presents, lured by the pretty cover. She had given away or procured for her personal use some fifty copies more. The remaining four hundred and forty-four copies—what of their fate?

Where do the books go, published by young authors at their own risk?

History is silent!

CHAPTER XV.

A THRILLING ENCOUNTER.

With a sad, majestic motion,
With a stately, slow surprise,
From their earthward-bound devotion,
Lifting up your languid eyes—
Would you freeze my too loud boldness,
Dumbly smiling as you go,
One faint frown of distant coldness
Flitting fast across your marble brow?

Matthew Arnold.

CHRISTMAS came and went ; week after week of the new year slipped by, and Evelyn was still leading her strange, unwonted life in the Bayswater lodgings with Miss Wentworth. What was to be the end of it all ? She heard occasionally from Dottie, but the letters gave such vivid descriptions of Algy's forlornness, and the misery to which the Lancaster household was reduced by her obstinacy, that the correspondence was by no means exhilarating. Algy himself called and wrote several times ; but on one visit Evelyn happened to be out, and Miss Wentworth signified to him, with more candour than politeness, that he had better let her alone.

'She's not the more likely to consent because she is worried within an inch of her life.'

'But what are we to do ?' cried Algy, in desperation. 'The Elms is a perfect desert. I don't want to drive her away, but my mother

won't hear of my leaving home. I'm sure I wish I had never come back from the Continent.'

'I wish you never had,' was on the tip of Miss Wentworth's tongue to reply. She was not hard-hearted; but she had watched Algy closely, had gathered certain facts about him from the Lichtensteins, and felt sure he would soon recover his disappointment.

The American lady had brought a few introductions to various people in London society. Evelyn's acquaintance had been hitherto much restricted to her suburban circle, and it was interesting and amusing to her to appear as Miss Wentworth's young friend here and there at a stray *réunion* in February.

'Mrs. Wyndham wants us to take tickets for a concert she is to give on the fifteenth on behalf of the Children's Hospital,' announced Miss Wentworth one morning. 'And as it is for a very good object, I believe we'll go.'

The concert was a brilliant one. Artists of high rank gave their services, and the large drawing-room of Mrs. Wyndham's house in Bruton Street was thronged on the evening in question with a fashionable audience—women in diamonds and full dress, with a goodly sprinkling of the other sex. Just as the music was about to begin, there was a slight commotion among the guests, and the hostess was seen escorting a lady to a chair that had been carefully kept vacant in the front row.

Evelyn started at the sight of the tall, slight

figure, in its draperies of fine black lace with an Indian shawl thrown carelessly across the shoulders. It was Mrs. Allingham West.

A great agitation instantly arose in the girl's mind. She longed to speak once more to her heroine; but dared she, could she claim acquaintance? It was almost a relief that the music would enforce silence, and enchain her to her chair for at least an hour and a half longer; and as she was sitting several rows behind Mrs. West, she was unable to do more than watch the poise of her fine head, catching once and again the profile of her face as she turned to her neighbour. But great was her dismay, as soon as the song was over, to hear Miss Wentworth observe, in calm, low tones—

‘I am glad to observe that Mrs. Allingham West has come in. I did not wish to go back to my own country without an interview; and what failed me at Engelberg I shall get in London. We will go and speak to her shortly.’

‘Oh, do you think we had better?’ hesitated Evelyn, in great dismay; ‘she may not remember me; and you do not know her at all!’

Miss Wentworth's reply was suggestive.

‘No, I do not know her; but *I mean to.*’

It would be difficult to describe the anguish of Evelyn's mind during the rest of that concert. She never knew what was sung or played. She felt terribly responsible for Miss Wentworth, and in her exaggerated girlish consciousness, and her reverence for the well-known authoress, she really felt as though she would

be grateful to vanish into nothingness. Once a wild idea seized her of fainting and being taken out, so as to escape from the coming ordeal. She looked despairingly at Miss Wentworth; with her coronet of white hair, the curious pallor of her fine skin, and the brilliance of her black eyes, her whole air of weirdness and daintiness set off by her plain black velvet gown, the little American lady had certainly a most distinguished appearance; no one would, in the wildest moments of aberration, accuse her of vulgarity; and yet the act she proposed, of deliberately introducing herself to an eminent woman—how abhorrent to every notion of English propriety! Poor Evelyn! she revolved over and over again in her mind what to say to deter her, what to do to soften the suddenness of the proceeding; but she sought in vain for any means of averting the catastrophe.

At length the concert, interminable as it seemed, came to an end; there was a buzz of applause, and then people began to rise, to take leave, to exchange a few words with one and another. Now was Miss Wentworth's time. Undaunted by any fears, or by the fact that Mrs. Allingham West was surrounded by a little court of men and women, she sailed up to the top of the room, awaited a pause in the conversation, and boldly extending a perfectly fitting little grey glove, she remarked, in her distinct American tones—

‘I venture to introduce myself to Mrs. Allingham West. As an Amurrican I should

like to have an opportunity of expressing my own appreciation — the appreciation of my countrymen and countrywomen—for her remarkable genius.'

The grey glove remained extended, and Mrs. West had no alternative but to take it.

'Oh! allow me to introduce Miss Wentworth to you,' hurriedly said Mrs. Wyndham, uncomfortably aware that Mrs. West was not at all fond of public compliments, interviews, and allusions to her genius of such an obtrusive character.

'You are very good, I am sure,' replied the authoress, with a touch of hauteur.

'And I can see that you all agree with my little friend over there that I am doing a very unconventional thing,' pursued Miss Wentworth, looking round on the little coterie of men and women in the most easy and unembarrassed manner possible. 'Poor child! she is ready to sink into the ground with discomposure; but it was my only opportunity, and I am sure Mrs. Allingham West will forgive me. I leave Europe before many months are past.'

This little speech, in its perfect candour, quite set the American lady right in the eyes of all; and it had, of course, the effect of turning attention to Evelyn. In her white silk gown and daffodils she stood there, alone, out of hearing; with such an expression of disturbance and discomfort on her pretty face that it went to the heart of two or three spectators. The whole situation was plain in a moment.

‘Why, that is my little friend of Engelberg!’ exclaimed Mrs. West, who did not remember Miss Wentworth, but recognised the girl with whom she had had so much talk. ‘Mr. Muir, do go and bring her to me.’

A tall gentleman, with rough curly hair and beard, and bright eyes, started from Mrs. West’s side with alacrity to do her bidding. And Evelyn suddenly looking up, almost expecting to find Miss Wentworth crushed to the earth by the force of British scorn, found a pleasant, friendly little stir going on, kind glances directed towards her, Miss Wentworth talking away at perfect ease to the celebrated lady, and a gentleman saying to her in a Scotch accent—

‘Miss Hope, Mrs. Allingham West would like to speak to you.’

‘Oh!’ cried Evelyn, in a subdued flutter. She recognised the messenger; it was the Scotchman she had met at the Ladies’ Conversazione of the Royal Society, but she did not feel any wonder at seeing him again. The wonder was that she was really going once more to worship at the shrine of her goddess.

Nothing very wonderful passed after all! Mrs. West greeted Evelyn very kindly and cordially, and made several pleasant little speeches. Then she said—

‘You must come to one of my Thursday evenings. I will send you a card.’

‘I am staying away from home just now,’ faltered Evelyn—‘at Bayswater, with Miss Wentworth.’

‘Oh, you must both come ; Mrs. Wyndham will forward the cards,’ replied Mrs. Allingham West, most graciously ; and then there were smiles and farewells, and Mr. Muir escorted Miss Wentworth and Evelyn downstairs to their carriage.

How utterly the girl’s forebodings were turned into delight ! She was as grateful to Miss Wentworth as she had been ashamed of her half an hour ago.

‘Oh, how glorious ! How splendid ! Only to think, dear Miss Wentworth, that we are actually going to Mrs. Allingham West’s house ! How glad I am we met her again !’

‘There’s nothing lost by being too modest,’ responded Miss Wentworth, drawing the folds of her rich opera cloak around her ; ‘and if I admire a woman’s genius I want to know why I am not to tell her so.’

Evelyn had no answer ready, and was quite willing to accept the result of things as they were.

On the very Thursday she and Miss Wentworth were going to accept Mrs. West’s hospitality, Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie were sitting in the resplendent drawing-room at The Elms. Dottie had lost much of the merry, bright expression that formerly characterised her, and a line of worry was on Mrs. Lancaster’s ‘usually placid brow.

‘But things can’t go on for ever and ever like this, mother dear,’ the girl was saying, in a slightly querulous tone. ‘Evelyn has been

away from us nearly five months now. Miss Wentworth will sail for America in June; what's Evelyn to do then? This is her home, after all.'

'I don't know, I'm sure,' fretted Mrs. Lancaster. 'I wish she would be reasonable, and come back and marry Algy. No one can expect I am to be separated from my only son.'

'Don't you think Algy's getting over it?' suddenly asked Dottie. 'He has looked very cheerful lately; and he has enjoyed all the dances we have been to; and last night he paid great attention to one or two of his partners, and ate a very good supper. I think he is forgetting; and do you know, mother, if Evelyn cannot like him, I think he *ought* to try to get over it.'

'Oh, my dear!' ejaculated Mrs. Lancaster, horrified at the suggestion of Algy having cheerfully to renounce anything he wanted. 'I am sure it would be dreadfully trying to him to see your cousin about.'

A loud ring at the bell interrupted this colloquy, and a servant shortly announced—

'Mr. Hope!'

There was no time to utter the exclamation of dismay that rose to the lips of mother and daughter. Mr. Hope, they knew vaguely, had been wintering abroad, but of his return they knew nothing. He came into the room, military, fresh, upright as ever, and after the first civil greetings, responded—

'Yes, I only crossed yesterday. Left sun-

shine behind me in the South, it appears ; we cheat the winter there. Where's Evelyn ?'

'Evelyn!' stammered Mrs. Lancaster.

'Yes ; I quite want to see the child again. I never lost sight of her for so long before. What's wrong—she's not ill, I hope ?'

'She's gone away for a little time,' replied the elder lady, much confused and disturbed.

'You speak as if there were something amiss,' observed Mr. Hope, contracting his grey eyebrows ; 'kindly tell me anything you have to tell me at once.'

Thus adjured, Mrs. Lancaster proceeded in much anguish and agitation to describe the circumstances that had led to Evelyn's taking up her temporary abode with Miss Wentworth. Mr. Hope's aspect was the reverse of encouraging, and the poor lady's habitual awe of him increased tenfold.

'I really did think I must have sunk into the earth,' she said to Dottie afterwards.

'So you mean to tell me, madam, that you have driven away your niece from her home because of this fancy of your son's ?' demanded Mr. Hope. 'First cousins should be safe from that kind of thing. I call it preposterous—simply preposterous ! The young fellow should have gone away again till he could get over it.'

'But what were we to do ?' almost wailed Mrs. Lancaster.

'I can tell you what you should *not* have done : and that is, turn away an orphan girl

whom you had taken into your family, just because your son chose to fancy himself in love with her,' retorted Mr. Hope. 'A visit is all very well, but five months with a stranger American—— Upon my word!'

He was pacing up and down the room, and Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie could see he was very angry indeed.

'You ought to have written to me, as the child's only other relative. I would have prevented her being flung on the hospitality of strangers. An American woman, forsooth!'

'Miss Wentworth is a very nice lady,' feebly interposed Mrs. Lancaster; but Mr. Hope did not like Americans, and took no heed of the interruption.

'She must come to me,' he continued. 'She will be welcome at my house. My housekeeper will look after her—it's a bachelor household; but it's the best we can do for the child. Have the goodness, madam, to give me her address, and pack up any things she has left here.'

The sternness of Mr. Hope's face as he said this terrified Mrs. Lancaster so much that she could utter no words in self-exculpation. She wrote down what he required, and with the briefest of farewells he strode out of the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONGENIAL SOCIETY.

Where each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech.

Tennyson.

MRS. ALLINGHAM WEST'S rooms were always crowded on her 'Thursday evenings.' To gain admission to the presence of the celebrated novelist was a distinction eagerly coveted; although two years ago she had been left in comparative solitude. Her drawing-rooms were lit by the soft, subdued glow of many wax candles. Algerian curtains, Japanese screens, Chelsea china, the spreading leaves of many palms—these formed a background against which the pageant of London society displayed itself. There were windows with deep embrasures, and window-sills where one could sit at ease; the rooms were old-fashioned in shape, and there were recesses here and there which gave admirable opportunity for a *tête-à-tête*. Low ebony bookcases ran against the walls, furnished richly with books in good bindings. The authoress would not have books banished from any room, although her peculiar private sanctum, lined

with shelves from floor to ceiling, was downstairs.

It may easily be imagined that Evelyn's heart was in a flutter when she entered the softly-lighted, murmuring scene with Miss Wentworth. There was an air of culture, grace, and refinement about the interior which contrasted strongly with the homes—rich and luxurious though they were—to which she had been accustomed.

The rooms were already full of all sorts of people—in great variety of dress as to the womankind—for Mrs. West entertained with impartiality great people who had 'taken her up,' and the poorest woman who might claim kinship with her in the sisterhood of talent. Struggling artists, musicians and painters as well as authors, found their way to the pretty house at Chelsea, and Mrs. Allingham West did all in her power to give them a helping hand.

At first Miss Wentworth and Evelyn could not distinguish their hostess, but in a moment they saw her surrounded as usual by a cluster of men and women ; the words rose to Evelyn's mind in a little confusion—

'As 'midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all.'

Her thoughtful face looked more distinguished than ever among her guests.

She greeted them kindly ; then they withdrew among the others.

Miss Wentworth began talking directly with great energy, catechising the first person near her, for it was plain even to her that she could not claim the hostess for a confidential chat. Evelyn had not the American's *sang froid*, and stood about for a moment or two looking for a chair or for some friendly face. She felt a little abashed and lonely, for not one of all these people, some of whom she felt sure were distinguished, was known to her.

‘I wish they had their names printed on their backs,’ she reflected. ‘It is so tantalising to see people who may be celebrated, and never to know it.’

The tones of a voice she had heard before fell on her ear like music.

‘Miss Hope, will you come into the back drawing-room? I have a seat for you,’ said the voice, in Scotch accents; and turning round Evelyn beheld the tall form of Mr. Muir. He skilfully piloted her among the men and women to a recessed and cushioned window seat, where they could sit and look out upon the crowd. The grand piano stood close to them, in such a way that they were fenced in from the trailing gowns.

‘We shall have some music soon,’ remarked Mr. Muir, ‘but till then we may talk.’

Evelyn was grateful for the seat and for the acquaintanceship among all these strange faces, but she did not know that she wanted to talk. She did not care about Mr. Muir, and remembered he had spoken disparagingly of her

idol on the first occasion she ever saw him. He also appeared to recollect that encounter, for he said, after a few casual remarks and replies—

‘The first time we met I think you were anxious to see Mrs. Allingham West. It was at the Royal Society’s *Conversazione*.’

‘I remember perfectly,’ replied Evelyn, ‘and you said you did not care for her book. I did not think you were acquainted with her, from the way you spoke then.’

‘Must one always admire all the books of one’s friends?’ inquired the Scotchman. ‘That would be rather a tax upon friendship.’

‘Well, if I had a friend who had written a book, I should not disparage it to strangers,’ replied Evelyn, suddenly rousing up.

The bright eyes of Mr. Muir flashed with a gleam of suppressed amusement.

‘If you remember, I only said what I did in answer to a remark of your own. You said “everybody” admired it. So I felt obliged to say—I did not altogether. But I did not disparage it further than that, and yet it gained me your scorn and contempt. One longs to be an author when one sees what partisanship it can win.’

Scorn and contempt! This was a curious way to talk; and yet Mr. Muir looked perfectly at ease.

‘Shall I take the trouble to contradict him?’ thought Evelyn, and decided in the negative.

‘What made you think it gained my scorn and contempt?’ asked she.

‘You crushed me with a terrible remark, “Thought is spiritual, but science is material.” I wondered at the time what it meant, and I am wondering now. Would it be impertinent to ask you to explain it? It has often weighed upon my mind.’

Mr. Muir spoke with perfect seriousness, and Evelyn, if she had been the Evelyn of a few months ago, would have taken his request in sober earnest. She was so accustomed in the old days to hold forth like an oracle that she would not have been surprised at any tribute to her powers. But she was wiser now, and consequently felt both angry and mortified. She did not speak for a moment or two, then said haughtily—

‘It would be rather a hard fate if every foolish remark one makes were to be remembered for a year.’

‘Pardon me,’ returned Mr. Muir, ‘I did not know you considered it a foolish remark, or I would not have reminded you of it.’ His tone was changed, and Evelyn could detect real kindness in his look.

‘You must have a very good memory,’ she answered, smiling at him; ‘inconveniently good.’

‘I certainly remember all that passed that evening,’ rejoined Mr. Muir quietly; ‘but then it was no ordinary occasion.’

‘I am sorry any stupid remarks of mine should mingle with the memory,’ said Evelyn.

‘But if you know Mrs. Allingham West, would you mind telling me as much about her as you can?’

‘Ah, you still feel the old fascination, I see,’ replied Mr. Muir. ‘First of all, have you read her former books?’

‘What, besides *Transmigrations*? No.’

‘I think that is a mistake of yours. Why not?’

‘I heard they were quite different, and I thought they would perhaps spoil the charm,’ acknowledged Evelyn.

The Scotchman threw back his head in a way that signified disapprobation.

‘Oh, but if you really admire an author, you ought to learn as much as he or she can teach you,’ he said. ‘The reason I did not speak warmly of *Transmigrations* was that I admired it less than her former work, which had a great hold upon me. I thought she was leaving the subjects she could touch best; but the public thought differently.’

He was silent; then went on in a lower voice—

‘Mrs. West had an invalid husband for many years. She wrote, to support him, articles in magazines, and stories. Some of these were of quite unusual power and charm. They contained a quiet delineation of Nature, an accuracy, a freshness, that are rare, and that must in time have made their mark. At last he died. She had worked hard, but her name was little known. For awhile she could scarcely write

at all ; she was paralysed with grief. Then all at once she wrote this book, which brought her fame and wealth with one bound, because it hit the popular taste. He who could best have appreciated her honours was gone, and she said to me once : "It is a sad use for my laurels, to lay them on my husband's grave."'

Mr. Muir paused, for he saw tears in Evelyn's eyes.

'Ah ! it is a piteous story,' he resumed in a moved tone, 'and you cannot wonder that I cling with affection to the earlier books. One or two of them did for me in my youth what Wordsworth's poems did for the elder generation—opened my eyes to the teaching of Nature. And I feel jealous pity, somehow, for the stories that could not win back the husband's fading life, nor coax the cold world to look kindly on the toiling woman.'

'Oh, how sad ! how heartbreaking !' cried Evelyn impulsively ; 'and that fame should come too late for him to know !' She stopped.

'There are consolations ; for Mrs. Allingham West retains her faith in God and immortality,' said Mr Muir gravely. 'I say her *faith*—no mere conventional show of belief ; and if you have much acquaintance with the world of literature just now, you will know that this is not universal with writers of genius by any means—by any means. It is a difficult age to live in. The Atheists in old days had a hard time of it. I sometimes think that times are to be changed,

and that the sincere Christian will soon, among clever people, be the one to need courage in avowing himself.'

'Do you really think that the power of Christianity is growing less?' asked Evelyn anxiously.

'I think that the power of hollow profession, conventional shibboleths, is growing less—and a very good thing too. But I hold with all my heart that He, the founder of Christianity, was never more loved and honoured than now. The reign of Jesus Christ is yet to come; but come it will. *He must reign.* The ideas He taught are permeating modern society more and more, and in time men will learn to see Him as He is.'

'Yes, the ideas He taught,' replied Evelyn in a low voice, 'such as gain through sacrifice, life through death, self-forgetfulness the only road to happiness. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." It seems to me the world is only just awaking to the true meaning of words such as these.

'And,' she continued, 'I have especially realized more of late the wonderful power of the secret of the Christian life, that all our hope lies, not in ourselves, but in Him who died for us.

'Our own personality varies so much, is so poor and miserable a thing,' she went on, encouraged by the sympathetic silence of her companion, 'that if we had to trust in that, we should be wretched. One day we might feel

triumphant; another, we should be utterly cast down. But as it is——'

'As it is, in looking away from self to any ideal, the gazer grows into something of the same likeness,—is that what you mean?' asked Mr. Muir kindly.

'That and something more than that,' answered Evelyn; 'for in a sense our own life is bound up in *our* Ideal.'

She spoke in a low voice, timidly, yet sure she should not be misunderstood.

Much more talk followed on the meaning of life; conceived and uttered in the spirit of Adelaide Proctor's lines:

'Nothing resting in its own completeness
Can have worth or beauty; but alone
Because it leads and tends to further sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.'

This was a very unusual vein of conversation for an evening party, or once upon a time it would have been so; but one of the features of the present day is an increasing earnestness and interest in all aspects of life. Evelyn felt much attracted by Mr. Muir, in spite of her previous dislike. 'I wonder what he is?' she thought. She enjoyed talking to him heartily. He led the conversation, after the grave and heartfelt words he had uttered, away to literature; and though once again Evelyn felt how little she had read and how little she knew, that conviction was not so novel to her as it had formerly been. The winter with Miss Wentworth, coming upon the stay at Engelberg, had done

her incalculable good, widened her horizon, and shown her how great was the world of art and thought.

Mr. Muir, on his part, considered Miss Hope fresh, intelligent, and most interesting to talk to.

‘She’s very much changed since that evening I met her first,’ he reflected. ‘She made the impression upon me of a pretty but most conceited girl. I was either mistaken or she has altered.’ And he applied himself with fresh zeal to the delightful task of drawing Evelyn out.

Mrs. Allingham West cast more than one glance in their direction, but did not approach them. Evelyn was quite surprised when she found people beginning to take leave, and it was with much reluctance that she followed Miss Wentworth to bid farewell to their hostess.

‘You seem to have enjoyed talking to my little friend Miss Hope,’ observed Mrs. West, some time afterwards, to Mr. Muir, who was one of the last to depart. ‘I hope you have made your peace with her?’

‘Made my peace? I do not quite understand you.’

‘Why, did you not review her poems?’

‘Her poems? Not that I am aware of.’

‘Yes, yes, in the *Critic*. What was the name of the book? The poor child nearly fainted away on the spot when she found me reading the article.’

‘Oh, I am sure you are mistaken,’ cried Mr. Muir; ‘she said nothing about any book.’

‘I have the name! *Day-dreams*, by Espérance, reviewed in the *Critic* last August. Surely you recollect?’

Mr. Muir stood aghast. ‘I do remember something of the kind, in a general article; a paragraph or two about some small volume of poems Dalrymple sent me. Do you really mean to say she wrote them?’

‘Of course she did. Espérance stands for Hope. It was her first book. She was nearly heart-broken at your severity.’ Mrs. Allingham West had a spice of mischief in her. ‘I could not help being amused to see you together all the evening,’ she continued; ‘the English bard and the Scotch reviewer! I thought you were appeasing her indignation!’

‘Was it—were my remarks very unfavourable?’ faltered he.

‘Unfavourable! That is a very mild word for them. I should say annihilating!’

‘What an unlucky coincidence!’ groaned Mr. Muir. ‘Did she really mind very much?’

‘As I tell you, she nearly fainted.’

And Mrs. West, whose gift of graphic description was improved by practice, rehearsed the whole scene that took place in her Engelberg sitting-room.

‘You were quite right, you know,’ she concluded. ‘The poor girl lent me her poems, and I was obliged to give the same verdict, only by insinuation rather than open condemna-

tion. I don't see the use of breaking a butterfly on the wheel.'

'May I ask you a favour, Mrs. West?' said Mr. Muir quietly. 'Don't tell her.'

'Certainly not,' replied the lady; 'but why? Haven't you the courage of your convictions? A reviewer ought to be hardened to all such considerations as hurting people's feelings.'

'I would rather tell her myself,' replied the reviewer in question.

Mrs. West half repented her playfulness, for he looked very much perturbed as he bade his hostess good-bye.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NEW HOME.

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus,—
There is no virtue like necessity.

Shakespeare.

EVELYN found herself, on the day following her evening at Mrs. Allingham West's, in a flutter of pleasurable excitement. This literary world into which she had entered was full of new suggestions, new possibilities for her. Conversation with those of superior mental calibre, who will take pains to draw out and to help each growing tendency towards that which is highest, is of all things the most stimulating. Evelyn had enjoyed much of this pleasure in different forms during the past twelve months, and last night's experience was specially exhilarating. She was just discussing with Miss Wentworth what Mr. Muir had said to her about Christianity, when Mr. Austin Hope was announced.

'My uncle! I thought he was abroad,' exclaimed Evelyn, and hastened to greet the visitor, who showed an unusual amount of kindness in his salutation.

'You're looking very well, in spite of what

you have gone through, my dear,' he observed. 'What a set of preposterous idiots!'

Evelyn rightly judged that this remark referred to her relatives at The Elms.

'That young fellow did not take his degree at college, I believe,' Mr. Hope went on. 'Just what I should have expected of him.'

Evelyn did not feel very clear in her own mind as to whether this referred to poor Algy's pretensions to herself or to his college career, but in any case she resolved to make an attempt to stand up for him.

'He is a very charming fellow, and I like him very much indeed. We were always like brother and sister.'

'Just so, brother and sister; that is what it ought to have been. Had I had any other idea, I would not have let you go to The Elms in the first place. However, you cannot return there under present circumstances, so what I have come to say is, you must live with me. I shall be very glad to have you,' continued Mr. Hope, with a rather unsuccessful attempt at enthusiasm. 'So get your bonnet on, and come along.'

'But, uncle,' cried the dismayed girl, 'I could not leave Miss Wentworth like that. She has been kindness itself to me.'

'Miss Wentworth! That's the American lady, I suppose? I never could bear Americans, especially the women. Always lecturing about women's rights, and so on. The last thing I should have thought could ever happen is that

my niece should be thrown on the hospitality of a Transatlantic female.'

'But, uncle, you are quite mistaken, I assure you. She is a charming woman, and most cultivated. Last night I went with her to Mrs. Allingham West's.'

'I suppose she asked for a card,' retorted Mr. Hope, in no wise impressed by this announcement. 'Trust an American for that sort of thing.'

'You really do her injustice,' protested Evelyn. 'I am sure you would like her. I will ask her to come downstairs——'

'No, no! Stop, my dear!' cried Mr. Hope, looking at his watch. 'If you really cannot come to day, come to-morrow. I have no time to see this Miss—what's her name? Apologise, and say everything that is civil for me. When shall we expect you?'

The prospect of going to Mr. Hope's house was most distasteful to poor Evelyn. She had lived on with Miss Wentworth week by week, hoping 'something would turn up,' and vaguely expecting she would go back to The Elms by some lucky turn of events. The present had been thoroughly enjoyable, and she had not troubled herself much about the future. Her uncle was quite the last friend in the world with whom she wished to take up her abode. But what else, after all, was to be done? As Mr. Hope proceeded to point out, Miss Wentworth would be returning to America before very long.

‘Didn’t they say anything at The Elms about my coming back?’ she faltered.

‘If they had, I should not have listened to it,’ returned Mr. Hope sternly. ‘They ought to be ashamed of themselves, every one.’

Evelyn felt this was a little hard on her unfortunate relatives, but it was useless to defend them. The upshot of her interview with Mr. Hope was that she promised to come to him in a week’s time. Mr. Hope demurred to the delay, but at last consented.

‘Perhaps you will let me be of use to you, uncle, in keeping house, and so on,’ she ventured, trying to make things cheerful for both of them.

But Mr. Hope looked exceedingly rigid.

‘As to that, my dear, I do not think I shall trouble you,’ he replied. ‘My housekeeper, Mrs. Willis, has been with me a great many years, and Stevens is an old servant. I do not suppose they will interfere with you, or you with them.’

This did not add to poor Evelyn’s delight in the prospect, and when her uncle had gone, she rushed upstairs to Miss Wentworth and burst into tears. The kindly American soothed her, and sympathised with her. She saw the change was inevitable, and in view of her own approaching departure for America she felt relieved that Evelyn had a settled home in prospect, though she grieved to lose her companionship.

In spite of all this, the parting was very hard when, a week later, Evelyn and her boxes were carried off by a cab. Miss Wentworth, though

she was not of a demonstrative nature, kissed the girl tenderly at parting, and poor Evelyn clung about her, for the child needed a woman's love and care.

Her uncle's house, in a highly respectable road at Kensington, was of a rather sombre and forbidding aspect. There was a great flight of steps, and pillars flanked a portentous hall door. An elderly housemaid, of irreproachable dress, but stiff and starched in appearance, admitted Evelyn, and looked, as the girl nervously imagined, displeasure at the sight of her boxes. Her uncle came out into the hall to greet her.

'Well, my dear, here you are! Good gracious, what a quantity of luggage the child has brought!'

'I had to bring all my things, uncle,' said poor Evelyn, who possessed the average number of pretty dresses required by the claims of society.

'All your things! I should think so. What, another box? We had two come from The Elms the other day, and a case of books into the bargain.'

Mr. Austin Hope, as a bachelor, had no idea of the necessities of civilization for a London young lady, and only meant what he said good-humouredly. But Evelyn felt that even this trivial incident was depressing to the last degree.

'The cabman can carry them up, Stevens,' said Mr. Hope. But Stevens, with a severe

glance at the cabinan's boots, replied that she and Jane would try and manage it by-and-by.

'He would have made more work than he saved, with mud on my stair-carpets,' she remarked, in discussing the young lady's arrival, in the kitchen, with Mrs. Willis and Jane. Mrs. Willis was cook-housekeeper; Jane, the 'young girl' who did all the rough work. It is easy to suppose that the arrival of a strange young lady for an indefinite period was not regarded with favour by the worthy trio, who had kept Mr. Hope's house in beautiful order, looked after his linen, cooked his *recherché* dinners, and spent his money for him from time immemorial.

It was with a sinking heart poor Evelyn followed Stevens up to the second floor. The bedroom into which she was admitted was furnished in an old-fashioned style. A mahogany four-poster, with red damask hangings and carved pillars polished to a high state of perfection, a mahogany wardrobe and dressing table, a Brussels carpet—all was good, heavy, costly, and ugly, but exquisitely clean. Evelyn sank into a chair and waited forlornly till it should please somebody to bring up her luggage. How very desolate life had become!

At length Stevens and Jane, with a martyred aspect, staggered into the room under dress-basket No. 1.

Evelyn nervously thanked them, and was relieved to begin unpacking. 'Shall I ever feel at home in this strange house?' she

thought, as she put away her girlish belongings in the deep, old-fashioned drawers. It was four o'clock.

'Master bade me say dinner will be on the table punctually at seven, Miss,' observed Stevens. 'And is there anything we can do for you?'

'Oh, for some afternoon tea!' thought Evelyn, but she dared not begin by asking this acid personage for what was, probably, contrary to the rules of the house. She thought she remembered her uncle denouncing afternoon tea as a dangerous luxury, only fit for silly women who wanted to ruin their health. So she faintly said, 'No, thank you, Stevens,' and tried to forget the cosy meal she and Miss Wentworth had always taken at that hour. 'If I can't have it any other way,' she thought, 'I will have an Etna and boil my own water up here.'

The dinner to which Evelyn was formally handed in by her uncle at the exact stroke of seven might have gone far to console her for the loss of afternoon tea. It began with olives, followed by clear soup with pieces of white of egg in it; a couple of *entrées* succeeded, each of some unusual concoction, so far as Evelyn's experience went. Mr. Hope ate leisurely of each course, and although what he took was moderate in quantity, he seemed to enjoy and appreciate his dinner very much indeed. The wines were evidently chosen with great care to match the courses.

'What! still an abstainer! Extremes,

Evelyn, extremes! You know enough Latin to understand this: *Medio tutissimus ibis?*'

Evelyn had not spirit enough to enter upon an argument on behalf of total abstinence just then. She wished the dinner were less tedious; half the number of courses would have amply sufficed for her.

'I had this on purpose for you, my dear,' said Mr. Hope, as a sweet omelette at length made its appearance. Evelyn fancied Stevens' eye was on her disapprovingly as she ate it, unaccompanied by Mr. Hope, who waited for the savouries. She thought he could scarcely dine so elaborately every night; but in this she was mistaken.

At length it was over, and Evelyn withdrew into the small drawing-room that occupied the front of the ground floor. She had, of course, been to the house before, but her visits had rather been matters of ceremony than anything else, and had been few and far between. She knew, however, that the greater part of the first storey was occupied by her uncle's library—a noble room with books from floor to ceiling, a very paradise for a student. She feared also that she would not be made free of that apartment.

Her fear was well-founded. Mr. Hope was scrupulously neat and fidgety; he could not have endured an impulsive girl, as he conceived Evelyn to be, flitting in and out, and disarranging his papers. He did a certain amount of literary work in a dilettante manner, and was engaged

at the present time in writing an article for one of the reviews, 'On the Influence of Climate on Species.' He was particular about his manuscripts and his books of reference, keeping both with mathematical accuracy very unusual in a literary man. He spent a great deal of time at the Natural History Museum, not far away, and was accustomed to enjoy plenty of congenial society. This evening he had refused an invitation, intending to make his niece happy at home; but somehow he did not know how to set about it. They talked of Engelberg as they drank their beautifully prepared coffee, and Evelyn congratulated her uncle on the excellence of the beverage, which was equal to anything she had tasted on the Continent. Then conversation flagged. Mr. Hope wanted to go and smoke a cigar in the library, and luxuriate among his books, but he did not want Evelyn there, and he did not like to leave her alone. So the slow hours dragged on their weary length till ten o'clock, when Evelyn escaped to bed, and Mr. Hope fled to smoke in peace.

'Am I always to sit in that prim drawing-room among the old china?' she desperately asked herself. 'Where am I to write and to study? I must have some retreat, or I shall be miserable.'

The next morning she ventured to explore a little, and found that the room behind her bedroom was untenanted. It looked upon trees that would soon put forth their leaves—for March was almost past—and conceal the backs .

of the opposite houses. It could be made a delightful study. Dare she ask her uncle if she might appropriate it? To sit in the drawing-room, with no place for books or writing-desk, would be impossible.

As she poured out his tea at the nine o'clock breakfast, she made the suggestion, timidly hinting that she should like to fit the room up out of her pocket money. Her books had already been sent from The Elms, and needed shelves. All she required besides was carpet, desk, table, and chairs.

Mr. Hope did not like the proposal very well. He foresaw difficulties with Stevens, and he did not believe, after Evelyn's folly in persisting in publishing *Day-dreams*, that she had capacity or purpose to do anything in writing or study worth making much fuss about. However, he could scarcely refuse her.

'You must not think you are to immure yourself because you have come to live with an old bachelor,' he said, kindly enough. 'My next-door neighbour, Mrs. Grant, wife of Professor Grant, has promised to take you anywhere with her own daughters. She is coming to call to-day, and will be very kind to you, I am sure.'

'Thank you very much, uncle; but I feel I must have some little nook I can write in. If you will let me, I will manage it without troubling you at all, even to give an order.'

'Well, well; if you can be sure you will not upset Stevens or Mrs. Willis. They are inval-

able servants, but just a little crotchety,' replied her uncle.

Evelyn faced the difficulty without delay. Stevens did not look with favour on the scheme, but Evelyn unblushingly bribed her into compliance. 'It is the only way, for I can't have these old servants make my life wretched,' she reflected. It was some little consolation to set to work that very day among the Kensington shops to furnish the room, and in bustling about Evelyn half forgot her heartache.

'Now, Evelyn Hope, you must face your destiny,' she said that evening to herself. 'Either make up your mind to be contented here, or go back to The Elms and marry Algy.'

Last night she had felt as if the latter alternative were almost possible; to-day better thoughts had come, and she resolved to brace herself up to do the best with her present life. In this determination the preparation of her study was no insignificant assistance to the lonely girl.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ENGLISH BARD AND SCOTCH REVIEWER.

O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by-and-by a cloud takes all away !

Shakespeare.

MR. HOPE was genuinely anxious to make Evelyn as comfortable as possible, and not to let her find her life under his roof dreary. As he had prophesied, Mrs. Grant, a motherly, good-natured soul, innocent of her husband's scientific tastes, was extremely kind to the girl, and would have had her be all day long with her own daughters. But these were two young ladies of the most conventional type, without an interest beyond dress and amusement, and Evelyn, though grateful for their goodwill, much preferred solitude to their society.

One evening, Mr. Hope, Evelyn, and the Grant family found themselves at one of those exhibitions which, under the familiar appellations of Healtheries, Fisheries, Colinderies, etc., have enlivened London of late years. The gardens were glittering with electric light ; the fountains were playing in silver radiance, and an excellent band was rehearsing strains of

well-chosen music. A throng of people, testifying by their dress to the comparative exclusiveness of a 'half-crown day,' strolled about enjoying the breath of the spring night, the music, and the brilliance of the illuminations.

'This is one of the tolls one has to pay to society in the course of the season,' grumbled Mr. Hope, who would very much rather have been in his library at home. The Misses Grant were busily greeting one and another acquaintance. Evelyn felt terribly lonely, and as the plaintive strains of a waltz by Gung'l sounded from the orchestra, her melancholy deepened. Just then she heard her uncle accosting some one, and looking up, she perceived it was Mr. Muir.

Evelyn's first introduction to him a year ago had been through Mr. Hope, and she was aware that the two men knew and liked each other. She felt it was a very pleasant coincidence, and was glad when Mr. Muir took a vacant chair at her side.

'Mr. Hope tells me you are staying with him for the present,' he said, after the first greetings had passed. Evelyn felt, she did not know how or why, that he was thoroughly glad to see her; and as she always had the consciousness through all her uncle's kindness that she was at his house on sufferance, this cordiality and interest were pleasant to her. She felt very much inclined to tell him more about herself, for she knew instinctively he would like to hear.

‘I have no settled home,’ she answered, ‘I am rather like a wanderer on the face of the earth.’

‘Indeed!’

‘Yes. When I met you first, I was living with my aunt and cousin, where I had been ever since I was a child. Afterwards I went to stay with an American lady, Miss Wentworth. Now I am at Kensington. I have scarcely any relatives belonging to me; my parents died long ago.’

‘I am very sorry,’ was all Mr. Muir’s reply; but Evelyn knew it was not conventional, and that he *was* very sorry for her. ‘You will probably return to your aunt?’ he remarked in a minute or two.

‘I don’t think so.’

Evelyn gave a sudden, violent start, and almost knocked her chair backwards as she spoke; for among the crowds of people sauntering close by she had recognised Algy—Algy, looking particularly bright and handsome, with a gardenia in his buttonhole, side by side with a well-dressed, dark-eyed girl, whom Evelyn knew to be Emily Thorne, a former member of the Somerville Club. The two were evidently on the best of terms. Algy was discoursing eloquently in a low voice, and Miss Thorne was listening with a conscious smile and blush, that were not easily misinterpreted. Neither of them saw Evelyn; they were far too intent upon their own conversation. She looked for Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie, but if they were in

the grounds they certainly were nowhere in the immediate vicinity.

'Has anything startled you? Did any one push against you?' asked Mr. Muir, looking savagely after the figure of the retreating Algy.

'No, thank you; I recognised some one I knew, that was all,' replied Evelyn. But she could scarcely hide her discomposure. It is a little startling when one imagines oneself first and best, to suspect that the place is filled. Theoretically, Evelyn was glad Algy should console himself, but a throng of other reflections crowded upon her mind. If this were so, why did they not tell her?—why did they not ask her to come back? 'They must care very little about me,' thought the orphan girl bitterly.

It would take too long to describe in detail how it came to pass, but Evelyn found herself by-and-by talking confidentially to Mr. Muir about her life. She had too much sense of honour to relate what had passed between Algy and herself, and merely let him understand there had been a family disagreement. The loneliness of her present lot he could well appreciate, for though he liked Mr. Hope, he knew perfectly well that he was not in the least fitted to take charge of a girl like Evelyn.

Mr. Hope was a 'man's man,' not a 'woman's man,' and Mr. Muir almost shuddered to think of a bright young life in that perfectly-appointed, stereotyped household.

'And what resource do you find, then?' he asked gently. 'You must need one.'

Evelyn hesitated a little.

'I am very fond of writing,' she confessed. 'My uncle has let me have a study to myself, and there I spend most of my time—when I am indoors. I love writing with my whole heart. I live in it, and if it were not for that just now, I really do not know what would become of me.'

'Have you written much before?' Mr. Muir felt guilty as he asked this question, but Evelyn unsuspectingly replied—

'I have always been writing. At school I always had the composition prizes. My father used to write a good deal for reviews, and so forth, so I suppose I inherit his love for it. When I was a little thing I used to write verses; people thought them very wonderful, and once some were published in a local newspaper. I shall never forget how proud I was. Then as I grew older I loved to write poetry. At last, do you know, I published a volume.'

Mr. Muir was silent.

'It was last summer,' continued Evelyn. 'If it had not been dark as they paced to and fro, she would scarcely have made this frank avowal. 'My friends admired my poetry so much, I thought other people would do the same, but it was a dreadful mistake of mine. There was one review only, but that was most cruel. It was in the *Critic*, and as soon as I read it I gave up all hope of ever doing anything as a poet.'

‘Was it only the review that made you come to that decision?’

‘No,’ acknowledged Evelyn, ‘I think going to Switzerland, and contrasting my own verses with the glory and beauty of everything around me, made me feel how poor and paltry they were. There was a musician at Engelberg, who played very splendidly. His music had an effect upon me too in the same way. But my talks with Mrs. Allingham West did the most.’

‘Did these things discourage you altogether from writing?’

‘Not altogether. They gave me a different view of life. I felt poetry was no longer the easy thing I had supposed it to be. I still felt I must write, but in another way.’

‘And what is that, if I may ask you?’

‘When I was at Engelberg I tried to make a little sketch of a girl I saw at the Engstlen-Alp, giving her an imaginary history, but describing just what I saw around me. I found that seemed to “go” easily, and I found great pleasure in it. Now I am writing a story, quite a brief one, in four or five chapters, the scene of which is laid in the same neighbourhood. It is called *The Hill of Angels*.’

‘That is a very pretty title.’

‘*Engel-Berg*—you have heard perhaps of the old legend,’ continued Evelyn. ‘I am connecting that with a modern story.’

‘Will you tell me something of the plot?’ he asked.

Evelyn, a little diffidently, complied.

'You cannot think how intensely I enjoy it,' she continued. 'I seem to live in the beautiful Swiss valley while I write. When I go and shut myself up I am surrounded by all the lovely scenes I am trying to describe. I see the clouds wreathing, and rising, and soaring away from the hill, and I dream over Wordsworth's sonnet.'

Mr. Muir did not recollect the sonnet in question, and Evelyn's soft voice repeated the last lines.

'Resplendent apparition! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze;
And watch the slow departing of the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.'

'You make me long to go to Engelberg,' said Mr. Muir, greatly pleased. 'And what will become of this story when it is finished?'

'I do not know,' she replied. 'I do not think I shall venture into print again.'

'Oh, but why not?' he asked. 'One failure ought not to discourage you for ever.'

Evelyn shook her head.

'You did not read that review,' she said, 'or you would not think I could face publicity a second time.'

The terrible moment had come! Mr. Muir felt he could in common honesty no longer shirk the question of authorship. And yet Evelyn, in her desolate girlhood, her winsomeness, her bright intelligence, her efforts after literary achievement, appealed so powerfully to

his sympathies, he could not bear to reveal himself as the monster of her imagination. However, he was not accustomed to shrink from telling the truth.

‘Miss Hope, I have something to say that will very likely surprise you,’ he announced abruptly. ‘You speak of a review in the *Critic* of your poems. I wrote that review!’

Evelyn started away from his side as though a shot had struck her.

‘You!’

It was only one word, but it was eloquent.

‘I review for that paper,’ he continued. ‘When I met you at Chelsea, I had, of course, no idea you were the author. Indeed, I had forgotten the circumstance altogether, it made no impression on me; but Mrs. West told me afterwards.’

Evelyn was silent; a perfect tumult of feelings surging in her breast. In spite of the fact that she had ceased to admire *Day-dreams*, she still regarded the reviewer whose words had stung her so keenly as a sort of monster in human form. Then the mortification to her of feeling that this man by her side, to whom she had been pouring forth her confidences out of a full heart, had read, had mercilessly criticised her efforts, had ridiculed them in print, was intolerable. She felt angry even to think that Mr. Muir had read her poems, reviewing apart. She had grown to like him, to trust him, to wish to stand well with him; and now this terrible gulf had suddenly appeared between

them. 'He has been drawing me out only to ridicule me afresh, of course!' she thought, in the bitterness of her heart; but she merely said in the most icy tones she could command, 'What a very curious coincidence! Don't you think we had better try to find my uncle and Mrs. Grant? They must be somewhere near the kiosk.'

'No,' replied Mr. Muir, 'not until you have heard me say a word or two. I can see you are very angry with me.'

Evelyn disdained to reply.

'I would not willingly say a word to hurt or grieve you,' he exclaimed, with real feeling in his voice; 'but how could I possibly tell—to begin with, how did I know I would ever see or speak to the author, much less that it would be you?' Mr. Muir's speech was rather involved, but it must be owned that explanation was difficult.

'How was it you said "she" in that review?' demanded Evelyn.

'Oh, it was easy to guess it was a woman's work, but that was all. Mr. Hope never told me you had written any poems.'

'Yes, "a woman's work,"' broke out poor Evelyn, hurt, humiliated, hardly knowing what she said. 'I have been talking freely to you of my hopes and my efforts, not knowing who you were; but of course you were only laughing at me afresh, and my "woman's work."'

'Now you are just talking like an unreasonable child,' said Mr. Muir emphatically. 'I

told you once, Miss Hope, and I tell you again, I would not lightly grieve or distress you. I have no such thought as to laugh at you. If I had, I should be unworthy the name of a gentleman. I wrote the couple of paragraphs in the *Critic*, in the ordinary exercise of my craft, saying what I honestly believed about the little book. I wish now that you had not been the author; but how can you blame me for that?’

Evelyn’s mortification and vexation were not very easy to account for to herself, but they were none the less real; it was a cruel blow to her pride to find herself placed in this position, *vis-à-vis* with her new acquaintance. It is one thing to speak disparagingly of your own work to a friend, and quite another thing to find that he not only shares, but has forestalled and out-run your own poor opinion. She thought she was very angry indeed with Mr. Muir, and additionally angry with him for the words he had just used. ‘Of course, he thinks he can treat me as he chooses,’ she meditated in the bitterness of her spirit, and she repeated in her most chilling tones—

‘If you will not take me back to my friends, Mr. Muir, I shall find the way by myself!’

There was no more to be said just then. Mr. Muir silently escorted Evelyn through the moving crowd, spoke a few words on indifferent subjects to Mr. Hope, and wished the party good-night.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE LIBRARY.

... An unlesioned girl, unschooled, unpractised ;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn ; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn.

Shakespeare.

EVELYN and her uncle were sitting one June morning over the breakfast-table, each silently reading correspondence. Conversation was apt to flag at these *tête-à-tête* meals, and indeed the contents of Evelyn's letter were so engrossing that she might have been pardoned for her absorption. It was from Dottie, and contained the news of Algy's engagement to Emily Thorne. We may omit the mass of his sister's commentaries on this event, and quote a few sentences that had especial bearing on Evelyn's life.

'Now, darling, there is no reason why you should not come back to your proper home with us. But mother thinks perhaps it will be better on all accounts for you to wait till Algy's marriage, which will be in the autumn. He is not going to live at The Elms with his wife, as we had proposed *under other circumstances*. I don't know if you will think it best to wait ; I only know that I want you back as soon as possible. I have been wretched ever since you left us.'

‘Poor, true-hearted Dottie!’ thought Evelyn, with a sigh, as she folded the letter. The tone gave evidence of very mingled feelings on the part of the writer; shame at her brother’s lack of constancy, remorse for her own share of harshness (small as this had been) towards Evelyn, a little jealousy of the prospective sister-in-law; but, above all, great delight in the thought of Evelyn’s return. And in this the girl could not help sharing. She felt an unspeakable relief in the thought that she would go back to her womankind; though her aunt especially had not treated her with consideration. But Evelyn’s love was not destroyed by what had passed. Her path was wonderfully cleared by this turn of events. ‘All things come to him who can wait,’ she reflected.

‘Mr. Muir is coming to dinner to-night, Evelyn.’ The words broke in upon her meditation.

‘Oh, uncle!’ cried Evelyn, with dismay. A vision of her parting with Mr. Muir in the gardens rose before her.

‘But I don’t think I shall be at home,’ she hastened to add, ‘I am going to see Miss Wentworth off at Euston for Liverpool.’

‘And at what time does her train start?’

‘Four o’clock,’ owned Evelyn reluctantly.

‘Then,’ replied Mr. Hope, putting up his *pince-nez* and regarding his niece fixedly, ‘may I inquire what reason there will be for your non-appearance at dinner at half-past seven?’

A confused scheme that had arisen in

Evelyn's mind of wandering about town and taking refuge in a confectioner's shop or some picture exhibition, was put to flight—and very properly so!

'Don't you like Mr. Muir?' continued Mr. Hope, observant of his niece's heightened colour.

'Not at all.'

'I wonder at your taste. He is a very fine fellow indeed; he has a rising practice at the Bar, and has reviewing work on the staff of some of our best papers. By the way, perhaps he has reviewed something of yours, and that is why you don't like him!'

This shaft, sent entirely at random, struck home, and Mr. Hope saw that it had done so. He was highly entertained.

'It wasn't that poetry book, was it—*Day-dreams*—that you *would* publish against my advice?

'Pray don't, uncle!' pleaded Evelyn. Mr. Hope refrained from pursuing the conversation, but kept on laughing to himself in a way that infuriated her more than tongue can tell. 'I am thankful I shall not have to spend many more months with you,' she undutifully thought, as she proceeded to turn the conversation by imparting to him the information in Dottie's letter. And it must be acknowledged that Mr. Hope was quite as much relieved as Evelyn by the proposed change in her prospects. He showered derision on the head of the unfortunate Algy.

‘I thought that idle young scapegrace was going to the Bar,’ he said; ‘this doesn’t look much like it.’

‘He has ample means to marry, without any profession.’

‘Well, no solicitor—unless he were an absolute maniac—would entrust a brief to such a feather-brained young fellow; so on the whole I daresay it’s money saved,’ meditated Mr. Hope.

Discomfort at the thought of the evening dwelt in Evelyn’s mind all day. Her interview with Miss Wentworth was something of a relief—and yet a sad one too. The little lady was shortly to sail for America, and bade Evelyn farewell with much affection. Evelyn thanked her warmly for all she had done.

‘And now mind, my dear, I shall be disappointed in you if you do not write something worth reading,’ were her last words. ‘That first book was not worthy of you. I never said so before, but you must

“Rise on stepping-stones
Of your dead self to higher things.”

Don’t be discouraged.’

‘I do write: it is my only resource; but publishing is another matter,’ said Evelyn despondently.

‘Oh, that will come in time. Now I must say good-bye, my child; but mind that on the other side of the globe Aurelia Wentworth’s heart will be always ready to beat with joy at your success.’

The train steamed out of the station, and Evelyn was left to make her way back to Kensington, and fortify herself as best she might for the prospect of the evening's ordeal.

It did not seem as though it were to be much of an ordeal after all, when Mr. Muir came. Evelyn had arrayed herself outwardly in a pretty gown of cream Indian silk, and panoplied herself inwardly with pride and disdain, but he greeted her as though they had parted on the best of terms, and appeared determined quietly to ignore all cause of quarrel between them. Evelyn was obliged to accept his arm into the dining-room, and she could not help observing with what gentleness and courtesy he continually directed the conversation so as to include herself. Mr. Hope was rather apt to talk on and on to a congenial friend, in utter disregard of any one else who did not come up to exactly the same standard of knowledge and intelligence, and this was dreadfully tantalising to Evelyn, who had mutely assisted at many such dinners, in the exasperating conviction that if the speakers would only make themselves a little more intelligible, she would be able to enjoy what they said, and contribute her own mite to the discussion. Mr. Muir, without obviously stooping to her level, drew her into the talk at every point, and she found herself now and again making remarks that were listened to with attention and interest by one at least of the two men.

‘Really, Evelyn has plenty of brains,’ thought

Mr. Hope. 'I wonder why she does not talk on these subjects with me.' They were speaking of the influence of climate on character, a topic that greatly interested Mr. Hope just then, and Evelyn had made a very sensible observation about the general lack of poetic fire among the Swiss.

The dinner passed off most pleasantly. 'Not,' thought Evelyn, 'that I forgive him in the least for that hateful review, but it would be discourteous to show it now.'

'No, I will never forgive him,' she thought again, when she had made her solitary exit, and had escaped to her own little study. A dreadful fascination made her take the hated number of the *Critic* from a drawer, and scan the contemptuous lines again.

'Mr. Hope wishes to know, Miss, if you will join him and Mr. Muir in the library,' was the message brought by Stevens; and Evelyn had no resource but to comply. She was not often admitted into this delightful room, though her uncle was willing to lend her any book she liked. She intensely enjoyed roaming from shelf to shelf, standing before the books, taking one and another down, and glancing over a page here and there; what some one has called 'browsing' among books. In spite of her animosity, she could not help feeling it was especially pleasant on this evening, with a sympathetic companion who was ready and anxious to exchange ideas and give information.

They were all three standing before the shelves that contained the priceless first editions of Ruskin, and Mr. Muir was waxing enthusiastic over certain passages of *Modern Painters*, when Mr. Hope was called downstairs.

‘Now, for a return of hostilities,’ thought Evelyn, and she felt her cheeks flush; but Mr. Muir had taken down a book, and was looking through its pages.

‘Here are some lines that would do as a motto for your story, *The Hill of Angels*,’ said he, offering *The Epic of Hades*.

Evelyn took it, half against her will, and read where he pointed—

‘Those who hear
Some fair faint echoes, though the crowd be deaf,
And see the white gods’ garments on the hills,
Which the crowd sees not, though they may not find
Fit music for their visions; they are blest,
Not pitiable. . . More it is than ease,
Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,
To have seen white Presences upon the hills,
To have heard the voices of the Eternal Gods.’

The lines were from the story of *Marsyas*, which shows the joy of artistic effort, even though it be a failure. ‘High failure overleaps the bound of low successes,’ says the poet, and the lesson is beautifully taught. Evelyn glanced with new interest through the poem.

‘Have you finished the sketch of which you spoke?’ he asked.

‘I have,’ she replied, a little distantly.

'I have been thinking it over,' continued Mr. Muir, 'and I am sure your best plan will be to send it to the editor of the *International Magazine*. I happen to know he wants bright, fresh, short stories ; and from what you told me of the plot of yours, I imagine it may suit him. If you once get on the staff, you will have plenty of occupation of the sort you like best.'

'I wonder *you* should advise me to publish again.' Evelyn felt the words were small and spiteful as soon as they were spoken.

'And I wonder you should be so unjust as to harp upon that string,' rejoined Mr. Muir ; 'but let that pass ; I don't ask you to forgive me for what is in reality the veriest trifle, but what I can see is an irreparable wrong in your eyes. You do not like being civil to me to-night, but as I am your uncle's guest you feel obliged to hide your feelings. Is it not so ? Ah, you are too honest to contradict it.'

Evelyn, who had imagined she was playing her part perfectly, felt greatly confused at this sudden home-thrust.

'I should not have supposed you capable of such childish resentment,' he went on, speaking as if he were greatly moved. 'Some women may be slight-natured and unreasonable, but not you ; you were meant for better things. However, whether you are offended with me or not, I should advise you to do what I say about the magazine. If you were disposed to accept my help, I would glance at the sketch and bring it before the editor's notice ;

but as that, probably, would not fall in with your present mood, you had better send it to him. Everything sent is read, and it will have a fair chance. After all, introductions are of little value.'

What to reply Evelyn did not know. She had a very distinct sense that she had been scolded, and she was at a loss how to make a suitable rejoinder. Should she refuse the proffered suggestion in scorn? She was conscious that she was grateful for it. Should she throw away her weapons, and own that she was silly and petulant? No, certainly not! What right had he over her—this stranger whom she had scarcely seen half a dozen times? She was indignant at being transformed from an injured woman into a silly child in his estimation, and yet she could see there was a certain remorseful tenderness over her, which, in spite of herself, moved her greatly. She was glad, yet sorry, that her uncle came in at this moment, and the rest of the evening passed in general conversation, in which, after a little while, Evelyn recovered herself sufficiently to join. Mr. Muir would not have her sent away, and pleaded against the cigar proposed by Mr. Hope.

Was it some wild illusion which made her feel, when she fled upstairs, that the evening had been the most delightful she had ever spent? And yet was she not very angry with him? That contemptuous review—it still made her utter an exclamation, and turn hot

all over, whenever she peeped at her copy of the *Critic* for August 20! And he would not apologise for it either!

Could it really be resentment for what she knew to be a just criticism, that was affecting the usually sensible Evelyn? It was not altogether so silly and childish a feeling as Mr. Muir supposed, but something much more involved.

When a friendship has made some way, and you see your new friend is interested in you, cares for you, admires you, it is a terrible shock to find that, as it were in some previous stage of existence, all unknown the one to the other, his mind has been in contact with yours, condemning, despising, ridiculing! It was this shock that Evelyn felt so keenly. Had she liked Mr. Muir less, the shock would have been less. But she was unable to account for her own apparently contradictory feelings, and still less for the agitation that kept her tossing on her pillow for hours before she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HILL OF ANGELS.

Ask me no more ; thy fate and mine are sealed :
I strove against the stream, and all in vain :
Let the great river take me to the main :
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

Tennyson.

'**I**s a far cry,' as Mr. Muir might have said, from Kensington to Engelberg. And yet the reader is privileged to flit in thought with instantaneous rapidity from the one to the other. The journey, too, in these days is swiftly accomplished. Mr. Hope was not accustomed to discuss and deliberate long before he made up his mind as to his movements.

One July evening he said to Evelyn, struck, perhaps, by the additional paleness of her face, and the weariness with which she vainly tried to toil through course after course at dinner—

'You're not looking well, child. There's no doubt Kensington is hot in the summer. What do you say to trying your favourite Engelberg again?'

'Uncle! can you really mean it?' was all Evelyn could ejaculate, as a sudden vision of the Titlis snows and the breezy upland pastures came before her.

‘Pack up your things then, and we’ll be off on Tuesday.’

At The Elms Mrs. Lancaster and Dottie would have deliberated for weeks or months before they made up their minds where to go for a summer holiday, and several more weeks would have been necessary to accustom themselves to the prospect of so complete a change of scene. But the ways of man and woman are different in this respect. Evelyn could scarcely believe her good fortune.

Mr. Hope, however, had already ascertained that Engelberg was a spot likely to agree with him, that it offered whey, milk, and air-cures, if he had required any of them, which he did not; that the cooking in the hotels was good, and that there was sure to be plenty of pleasant society. No wooden châteaux on a mountain top for him! He was curious, also, to see the monastery and the church. So it came to pass that in less than a week from the date of this conversation he and his niece were driving into the Alpine valley and up the road that led to the Felsberg hotel.

There was the familiar scene once more, and there were many familiar faces, too; for Engelberg is a spot that people revisit year after year. Evelyn found with delight that the beauty and glory of the place came upon her with fresh intensity. She had feared lest the impression should outrun the reality, and lest the dreams that had haunted her should be found too lovely for fact. But the mountains with their

varying outline, the pure brilliance of the Titlis snows, the mystic spell cast by the huge monastery brooding over the valley of which in ancient times it was the sovereign lord—all these renewed their empire over the heart of the girl.

There was another link that bound her to the place, but this was a secret as yet.

Mr. Hope deigned to express himself as pleased with the scenery, contented with the hotel. He was only much chagrined that he was not allowed to inspect the manuscripts in the library of the abbey, but he hoped by perseverance to win his point.

Evelyn roamed about, day after day, not attempting long excursions, such as the walk to the Engstlen-Alp, or to the Surenen Pass, for she had no young companion to join her; but exploring the pine woods anew and rambling along the terrace walks opposite the snow world. She visited the Arnitobel, and thought, with a mixture of compassion and amusement, of poor Algy and his bold simile of the torrents uniting in one. Only a short year! and it was not her life, but another's, that was to flow in the same channel as his own.

‘Have you seen the *International Magazine* for August?’ asked Mr. Hope of his niece, one day. ‘There is a story about this place with an illustration—and an uncommonly pretty story too. It is called *The Hill of Angels*.’

‘I thought you never read magazine stories, uncle,’ replied Evelyn, her eyes dancing with delight.

‘No more I do, as a rule,’ replied her unsuspecting relative; ‘but the local interest made me begin this, and the freshness of the whole thing drew me on. It’s very pretty indeed.’

Evelyn said nothing. By-and-by one and another began to talk about *The Hill of Angels*. The magazine lay in the reading-room, and soon was in general request. There was a charming picture of Engelberg; and this of course, together with the fact that the readers could verify the descriptions for themselves, proved the attraction, in the first place.

‘Have you read the *Hill of Angels*?’ came to be a frequent question addressed to a new arrival by those who wished to be friendly and sociable. People wrote home for fresh copies of the magazine, as the original one quickly became worn out. It even divided popular attention with the arrival of Mrs. Allingham West. Evelyn had known that her brilliant friend would probably come for a second stay, which might, so Mrs. West had told her, become an annual thing.

That first visit to Mrs. Allingham West’s house at Chelsea had been followed by two or three, and on each occasion Evelyn had met Mr. Muir. She had talked with him for hours, avoiding, as though by a tacit consent, the topic of the review, and guarding herself in a sort of armed reserve, while he would sometimes look at her with a strange steadfast melancholy; yet they always seemed attracted together. She had also ceased to feel that the authoress was

far, far aloof from her. It took time to win Mrs. West's regard, but the girl's adoration, her intelligence, her growing modesty as to her own powers, her loveableness, had achieved the possession of that friendship. It was, therefore, with intense delight that Evelyn anticipated her arrival. Mr. Hope, too, in spite of his cynicism, was gratified that his niece should receive an early invitation to Mrs. Allingham West's private sitting-room.

'You naughty child!' cried the lady, shaking her head at Evelyn, with a merry smile, as they sat together. 'So you are keeping the secret. No one in the hotel knows the story is yours. What a success it is!'

'Do you really think so?' Evelyn's heart gave a great bound of delight.

'Decidedly I do. It is fresh, it is interesting; above all, it is true. Of course you will do far better work than this in time to come. But for a beginning it is admirable. I don't live much in public here, as you know; still, I have made it my business to ascertain something about it, and every one is talking of the story. I have heard enough to turn your little head with vanity.'

'People have not much to read or talk about in holiday life like this,' said Evelyn modestly.

'True; but even discounting that, a considerable amount of real, genuine popularity remains. I congratulate you, my child. And now, tell me—how long are you going to keep up a grudge against Gerard Muir?'

A tide of colour rushed to Evelyn's cheeks, and ebbed again, leaving them deadly pale.

'A grudge against him!' she faltered.

'Yes, for that review. I feel an interest in the matter, for I first told him who you were. I could see how troubled he was to see he had given you pain. My dear, he has the noblest and truest heart that ever was. In my bitter trouble, in my husband's death, in all my struggles, he was like a younger brother, helping, advising, comforting. I cannot tell you what I think of him. Surely you will not let this absurd trifle prejudice you. Why, you agree yourself with what he said! You had outlived *Day-dreams* a month after you published it!'

'I am not prejudiced against him,' was all Evelyn could say.

'Well, he thinks you are, at any rate, and I told him I was convinced you were too sensible to keep up any annoyance for such a cause. It would show a very silly vanity, which I am quite sure you do not possess,' concluded Mrs. West, a little severely. 'Was it not he who advised you about this story?'

'Yes; I sent it to the *International Magazine* at his suggestion.'

'Ah, he had a hand, if not in its acceptance, at least in its being published so quickly,' thought Mrs. West.

Much conversation followed about the girl's literary aims; but through it all Evelyn felt a strange impatience. Did Mr. Muir really think

she was still angry about that review? No; she had never been really angry with him—it was mortification, wounded pride, annoyance at being lowered in his sight, vexation with herself—she could not tell what. She felt she must see him and explain. From what Mrs. West said he evidently still thought she was harbouring a ridiculous resentment.

‘Isn’t there a torrent that springs out of the hill-side in full volume somewhere here?’ inquired her uncle at breakfast next morning.

‘Yes, uncle; don’t you remember I describe it in *The Hill*’—— She stopped, covered with confusion.

‘You describe it in what?’ demanded Mr. Hope, putting up his *pince-nez*.

But Evelyn had no answer ready.

‘It is described in *The Hill of Angels*, I know. Why have you such a colour, child? Good gracious! you don’t mean to say that’s *your* production!’

Mr. Hope, quickly adding two and two together, had no doubt he was right, even before Evelyn acknowledged her authorship.

‘Good gracious!’ was all he could ejaculate, staring at his niece as if she had suddenly developed a pair of wings. ‘So that was what you were so busy about at home upstairs! I do believe the child has her father’s literary gift in her after all.’

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It was October, and Mr. Hope and Evelyn

were back at Kensington. On the morrow she was to return to her old life at The Elms. Her uncle had purposely prolonged their wanderings on the Continent until after the date of Algy's wedding, at which festivity he thought Evelyn's presence was not desired by her relatives; and now they had come back just in time for her to pack up and depart. With mingled feelings Evelyn looked forward to this change. Her stay under her uncle's roof had not been altogether happy; she could never forget her desolate chillness of heart as she first entered the bedroom where she was now busied in collecting her possessions. And yet there was something she should miss in the distant suburban home. After all, she was nearer here to the heart of the world, and felt its pulsations more strongly—— A tap at the door interrupted her reverie.

'Mr. Hope wishes you to go down to the library, Miss, please,' observed Stevens, with the patronising severity she had never relaxed since Evelyn's arrival.

'I wonder why he sends for me at such an inconvenient time,' thought Evelyn, just pausing to arrange her toilet from the disorder incident to packing. As she entered the library she started, for instead of Mr. Hope, there stood Mr. Muir. He had a troubled look in his face, and she instinctively felt that something of importance was to follow. Yet his first words were ordinary enough.

'I have come to say good-bye to you,' he

said, advancing to take her offered hand. 'I hear you leave Kensington to-morrow.'

'Yes; I am returning to live with my aunt.'

'I hope you will be happier for the change.'

'Thank you very much.'

A pause followed.

'Life has been rather hard for you sometimes, I know, of late,' began Mr. Muir; 'but you will not be the worse of it in the end. And you have made a success. I want to congratulate you on your story.'

Evelyn expressed her thanks, with eyes cast down.

'You would perhaps not have written so well if everything had gone quite smoothly with you,' continued her friend. 'The discipline of life has many uses, and one can write with more sympathy even in the brighter aspects of experience, if one has known disappointment and sorrow. Mrs. Allingham West could tell you that——'

'Ah, do not mention her name near mine!' broke out Evelyn.

'And why not? You must go on. You will not rest on this one story. You will have fresh efforts, fresh successes, in time to come.'

'I don't know,' sighed Evelyn. 'Sometimes I feel so weak and powerless to do what I would, I grow despairing.'

'You must let the title of your first story be an allegory to you,' said Mr. Muir. 'Remember it is the "Hill of Angels" you want to climb. The heights of literary success are

difficult to win; but they are near the skies. Keep your ideal high, work steadily, and you will achieve success. You do not know how glad I will always be to hear of it.'

Why did he speak so mournfully, as if they were on the brink of an eternal separation?

'I would have liked,' he continued, 'if we could have been friends, and have met now and then—but it cannot be.'

'And why not?' Evelyn found breath to utter.

'Because I would not be able to be satisfied with that,' he replied steadily, and as if trying to master his voice. 'And I see that anything beyond is hopeless. I have been thinking of it a long time, but I offended you almost before I knew you—and—and—I have come to bid you good-bye.'

O Reviewer, wise in book-lore, but ignorant of the human heart!

'Mr. Muir,' cried Evelyn, 'you do not—you cannot—think I am so vain and silly as still to resent what you wrote long ago. Every word was true. How badly I must have behaved to make you think so poorly of me!'

She turned upon him in generous warmth, and their eyes met.

The promised good-bye had not been said when, an hour later, Mr. Hope came in to ascertain the result of the private interview with Evelyn for which his friend had begged. Nor will it ever be said until the hour of the last parting.

‘Heaven lies about us,’ not only in our infancy, but in all the supreme hours of earthly happiness. And to those among the favoured of this life who have the heart to enjoy celestial gifts, the insight to perceive celestial visitants, the ‘Hill of Angels’ is never very far away.

THE END.



